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SIMPLE STORY BOOK

PRINTED IN
DEAN &
41/43 Ludgate Hill



GREAT BRITAIN
SON Ltd.
LONDON EC4

TINA AND TONY'S SNOWMAN



TINA and Tony were twins, and one day after Christmas they asked Mummy to let them make a snowman.

"All right," said Mummy, and she wrapped them up warmly in their cosy little coats and hats and long leggings, and off they went into the garden.

Tina and Tony fetched their own little spades from the shed and began digging in the deep snow.

In a little while they had made a lovely snowman. He had two small stones for his eyes, and a piece of red apple peel for his mouth.

Tina put a bright woollen scarf around his neck, and Tony put an old hat on his head.

They made him some arms out of some small branches which had blown off the old pear tree. He did look a fine fellow!

"Let's make him a bit bigger," said Tony.

"All right," said Tina, and they dug hard and smoothed some more snow on to the sides of



their snowman, until he began to look really huge.

"That's enough," said a deep voice crossly; "let me be, I don't want to be any fatter or I'll never get back to snowland!"

Tina and Tony looked at the snowman, their eyes wide with surprise.

"Did—did you speak, Mr. Snowman?" stammered Tony, holding Tina tightly by the hand.





"Of course I did," said the snowman crossly. "And don't you put any more snow on me or—or—I'll burst!"

"Don't be cross, Mr. Snowman," said Tina and Tony together.

Then Tony said, "Why won't you get back to snowland if we make you any bigger?"

"Because—don't you see, silly," said the snowman, "when the sun shines and melts away the snow, I'm so fat I'll take ages to melt, and I'll have to stay here until all my brot

and sisters are gone, and when I melt I shan't find the way back to snowland."

And the poor snowman began to cry. Of course he cried icicles, and they froze on his face and made him even fatter!

"Oh, dear Mr. Snowman, please don't cry," said Tina gently, and she ran up close to him and put her arms around him. "We promise not to make you any bigger, and when the sun comes back we'll come and help you melt away!"

"Thank you, Tina," said Mr. Snowman drying his eyes with his scarf, "then I shan't lose my way. You are kind children."

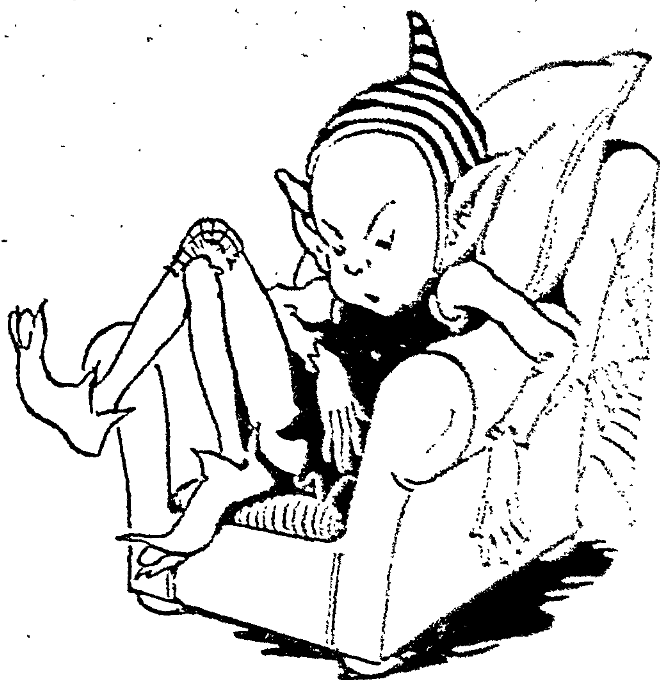
And so, when the sun came out next day and began to melt the snow, the children rushed out into the garden and started to pull down their snowman as fast as they could.

When Mr. Snowman had nearly melted they heard his voice coming from far away.

"Thank you, Tina and Tony," he said "I'm on my way home with my brothers and sisters. I'll always come back and see you when the snow falls; goodbye, goodbye."

DORA COOK

THE LAZY PIXIE



MOST of the fairies who lived in Pixie Town were busy little folk. They liked to scrub their doorsteps nice and white, to polish their knockers and to see their windows winking in the sunshine.

But one little pixie was very lazy. His name was Shut-Eye, and he was always curling up in his chair by the fire and going to sleep when he should have been doing his work.

So of course his house was the dirtiest and untidiest in the whole of Pixie Town.

The other Little People felt quite ashamed of him, and at last the Fee-Fum Fairy decided to teach him a lesson. She took a pair of pretty red shoes and put them on Shut-Eye's doorstep. Now, although these shoes *looked* quite ordinary, really they were magic ones,

and the Fee-Fum Fairy smiled to herself as she went back home again. Shut-Eye was going to have a surprise.

After a while Shut-Eye came walking up the street. He had been to the pastrycook's to buy himself a pie for his dinner, for he was so lazy he hardly ever did any cooking. In any case most of his pots and pans were broken and he couldn't be bothered to mend them.

What was this on his doorstep? A nice pair of new shoes? Just the very things he needed, for his toes were poking through the ones



he was wearing. Without stopping to inquire whether the shoes belonged to anybody else he kicked off his old pair and put on the new ones instead.

Then he sat down by the fire to eat his dinner. In the middle of the mantelpiece stood a clock, but it was not ticking. In fact it hardly ever did, for Shut-Eye couldn't be bothered to wind it. The curtains were dirty and hung crookedly at the window. The floor hadn't been swept for a week and there was a dusty cobweb in every corner of the room.

No wonder the Fee-Fum Fairy had decided it was time he learnt a lesson.

Hardly had Shut-Eye taken one bite of his pie when the new shoes began to pinch his feet.

"Oh, bother the things!" he said crossly, stooping down to take them off. Imagine his horror when he found that they were stuck fast. He pulled and he tugged, but it wasn't any good. The shoes just wouldn't come off.

Shut-Eye curled up his toes inside them, but the shoes pinched worse than ever.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" he sobbed. "Whatever shall I do?"

Suddenly the shoes began to sing in a squeaky little voice. Shut-Eye sat down and listened.

"Shut-Eye, Shut-Eye, get your mop and broom,
Sweep your house from top to toe, every single room.
There's dust on the landing, dust on the stair,
Dust in the bedroom and dust everywhere.
Lazy little fellow, if you dare to try and shirk,
We will pinch you and pinch you until you get to work."



Rather slowly Shut-Eye fetched a broom and began to sweep the room. As soon as he did



so the shoes stopped pinching him, but every time he pretended not to see the dirt in the corners a sharp little nip would remind him to be careful.

It was very late in the afternoon before he was able to eat his dinner. All the cobwebs had to be swept away, the hearth had to be cleaned and polished, the clock wound up and the windows rubbed until they winked in the sunshine.

Next day Shut-Eye was up earlier than anyone else in Pixie Town. He had to be, for he

was still wearing the magic shoes when he went to bed and they woke him up at six o'clock.

He made his bed, swept and dusted the room and lit the fire before he had his breakfast.

The frying-pan had a hole in it, so he had to mend it before he could fry the bacon, and by that time he was very, very hungry indeed. But, oh my! How he liked the nice, sizzly noise and the delicious smell as he dished it up on a clean hot plate. He cleared away and washed up without waiting for the shoes to pinch him. Then he scrubbed his doorstep until it was every bit as white as the Fee-Fum Fairy's.

All day long he was busy and, funnily enough, he found that he was whistling while he worked. Why, this was much nicer than curling up in a chair by the fire and going to sleep most of the time.

"Tick tock!" said the clock. The windows winked in the sunshine and all the pots and pans were mended. Shut-Eye felt so pleased and happy that he asked old Mr. Tell-a-Lot from across the road to come and have a cup of tea with him. Old Mr. Tell-a-Lot passed on

the news to the Fee-Fum Fairy and soon everybody in Pixie Town knew that Shut-Eye had turned over a new leaf.

The shoes came off and on quite easily after that and never pinched him at all. But, strange to say, Shut-Eye always wore them. He didn't want to go back to his old ways again and he knew that if ever he should start to be lazy a friendly little pinch from the magic shoes would remind him it was much nicer to be busy and useful than it was to be a lazy little good-for-nothing.

ELIZABETH WELLS



WILLIE WAIT-A-WHILE



WILLIE JIM never did any thing th moment h was asked.

"Come an get ready fo school, Mumm would cal and Willi Jim would answer, "In a minute, Mummy. just want to feed my rabbits."

Or, "Run to the baker's and get me a loaf and Willie-Jim would sulk and shuffle at reply, "I'll go presently, Mummy, when I' finished playing trains."

When he was called in to dinner, he wait until it was cold and uneatable; when he w told to put his toys away, he left them until forgot all about them; when he was asked wash the dishes he took so long to begin th in the end Mummy did them herself.

"You should be called Willie Wait-a-While said Aunt Jane angrily one day when he w

late going to meet her train because he had waited until he had finished drawing a battleship. "I never knew a boy take so long to obey."

One morning Willie-Jim awoke to hear the chimes of the church clock through his open window. One . . . three . . . seven . . . eight . . . nine.

Goodness! Nine o'clock! He must have counted wrongly. But no, the little clock on his mantelpiece said the same—nearly five-past now. Mummy must have forgotten it was a school morning because she always



woke him at eight o'clock, and he always said, "Wait a bit, Mummy. Just another five minutes."

Willie-Jim leapt out of bed and pulled on his clothes. "Where's my breakfast, Mummy?" he shouted as he ran downstairs.

But Mummy was enjoying her own porridge.

"Just a minute, Willie-Jim," she said. "I'll get it as soon as I've finished mine."

"But, Mummy, I'm late!" cried Willie-Jim. "It's past nine o'clock."

"Yes, Willie-Jim, I shan't be long," answered Mummy calmly.

Willie-Jim was most surprised and annoyed. All the same, he had a rather queer feeling that those were the very words he had used yesterday when Mummy had asked him to clean her shoes.

"Miss Brane told us specially not to be late," he argued, adding in despair, "I shan't have time to eat any breakfast now."

Almost in tears, he ran out of the house, slamming the door behind him.

Of course Miss Brane was angry with him for being late. "You must stay in after school to make up for it," she said.



The children had just begun to make windmills from squares of lovely coloured paper. "May I have some paper and scissors to make one?" asked Willie-Jim.

"Wait until I have finished marking these sum papers," said Miss Brane sharply, without looking up.

So Willie-Jim waited and waited, leaning first on one foot, then on the other.

At last he said timidly, "P-please, Miss Brane, have you forgotten my paper and scissors?"

"Why, so I had!" cried Miss Brane. "I'm

sorry, Willie-Jim, but really it isn't worth starting now because it's time to pack up."

Willie-Jim felt the tears rising behind his eyes. Yet a little voice inside him reminded him that the very same thing had happened last week when Daddy had asked him to weed the path and he had left it until it was too late.

He kept on being reminded all day long. At milk time the monitor took so long to find him a clean cup that there was no milk left for him: at playtime he accidentally knocked his ball over the playground wall, and Mr.





Neat, the caretaker, waited so long before he went to get it back that a little girl picked it up from the road and took it home. So Willie-Jim lost it.

At home time Willie-Jim came along with Jacko from next door.

"Hooray! Here's a lovely conker tree!" he cried as they turned the corner of Sandy Lane. "I'm going to climb up and pick some."

So up he went, higher and still higher because the biggest conkers always seemed *just* above his head. Jacko followed and stood on a comfortable little ledge just below.

Willie-Jim was just stretching out his hand towards a beauty which grew at the tip of a bendy branch, when—c-rr-ea-kk! Sss-ppl-iii-tt! "Oh, help," cried Willie-Jim in alarm. "This branch is breaking! Get out of the way, Jacko, quickly, so that I can get down."

"Wait a minute," called Jacko cheerfully. "I'll just get this one, and then I'll . . ."

"I *can't* wait!" yelled Willie-Jim. "I'm falling . . . Ouch!"

He landed with a painful bump—to find Mummy shaking his shoulder.

"Time to get up, Willie-Jim."

Willie-Jim blinked. "If only Jacko hadn't kept me waiting. . . ." he began.

"Now, Willie Wait-a-While," teased Mummy, "don't wait any longer, or you'll be late for school."

"I won't!" cried Willie-Jim, jumping out of bed. "I'm getting up this very minute!" And he was.

GLADYS M. BIRD

CHINESE LANTERN



ONCE upon a time Yan-Ho, a little Chinese boy, was ill, and could not go with the other children to one of their festivals. To make up for this, his father gave him a balloon, and Yan-Ho played with it in the garden, where his bed had been moved, for the rest of the day.

When night came, and Yan-Ho's bed was taken inside, the balloon lay forgotten under the almond-tree. It was not blown up, and that was why Yan-Ho's nurse did not see it.

Next day the little boy was taken into the garden again, and with a little cry of delight



he pointed to his balloon. When the nurs handed it to him, he blew it up until it looke like a lovely soft green ball, and he tied it wit a silk thread and asked his nurse to hang it on the almond-tree, where he could watch it floating about in the breeze.

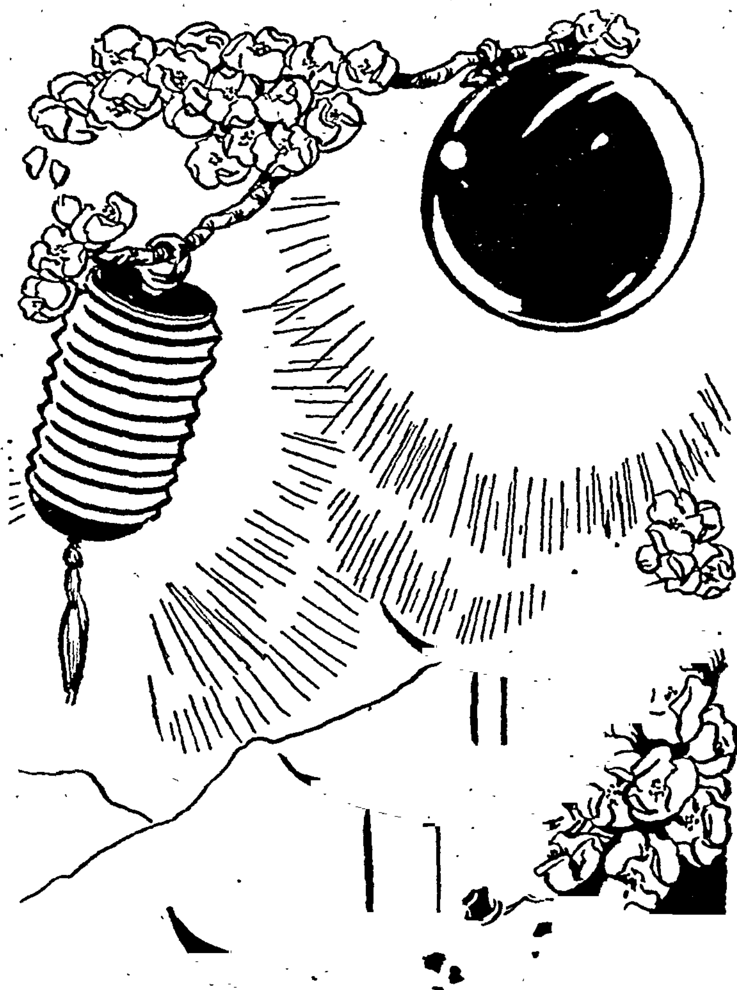
Yan-Ho noticed some little dark spots inside the balloon, but thought they must be little bits of leaf or grass.

That night he asked to have his bed place near the window so that he would be abl to see his balloon when he woke next morning. But Yan-Ho woke in the night, and it was

very dark. He looked through the window, and imagine his delight and surprise when he saw a ball of light where his balloon had been hanging.

"Father," he called excitedly. "Father! Do come and see! My balloon must be enchanted, it's just like a big golden ball."

His father and brothers ran into the garden



to look at the balloon. When they cut it down from the almond-tree, and took off the silk thread, they found several little glow-worms inside.

"Why!" exclaimed Yan-Ho. "They must have been in there all day. They must have crawled in when the balloon was left out last night."

His father blew up the balloon again and tied it back on to the almond-tree.

When the news of the fiery ball, as Yan-Ho called it, spread, the Emperor himself came to see it. He was so delighted that he gave an order that balloons with glow-worms in them were to hang on the trees all round the Palace.

And so, perhaps, Yan-Ho's balloon was the first chinese lantern.

NANCY WILLIAMS-DAVIES



THE HONEY PIE

MRS. BEAR said to Baby Bear one morning, "I am going to make a honey pie."

Baby Bear was so pleased, and promised his mammy that he would be a very good little bear whilst she baked the pie.

Mrs. Bear opened her cupboard, and took out a big bag of flour, and a big jar of honey, and of course a few other things, and she started to make a honey pie.

But Baby Bear got *so* tired of waiting for the pie, and he kept asking,

"Is the honey pie ready yet, Mammy Bear? I do want to eat my honey pie."

So, at last, Mrs. Bear said, "Now you be a good little Baby Bear. See, I will open the door wide, and you can sit on the step to wait until the pie is cooked. But do not go away, or you will get lost."

Baby Bear sat down on the



step, as he had been told to do, but soon he began to grow tired of sitting still, and he thought how nice it looked outside, and how beautiful it must be in the cool green wood.

He did not mean to go away, but he took two or three steps, then two or three more, and almost before he knew it he found himself in the wood.

Oh, how beautiful! Baby Bear had never been alone in the wood before, and in his excitement he forgot all about his Mammy Bear and the honey pie.

He climbed up a tree and sat on a nice, low branch. Once he heard a noise, and he was going to hide, but it was only Mrs. Badger going for a walk. She said, "Good morning", and passed on.

Before long Baby Bear was joined by Baby Bunny, who had also come to the wood to play, and the two got on very happily together. What fun they had, playing amongst the trees. It seemed as if they would never tire.

But, after all, he was only a very small bear, and all at once he grew tired of playing, and then he remembered his Mammy Bear, and the honey pie, which she was making for him.

He wanted to go back home, but he had gone around so many trees that he knew he could never find the way, so, tired and very unhappy, he sat down beneath a big tree and started to cry.

"Whatever is the matter?" asked Baby Bunny.

"I want to go home to my Mammy Bear, and I want my honey pie," sobbed poor Baby Bear.

"Well, don't cry, Baby Bear. I will take you home to your Mammy Bear. I think I know the way."

"Are you sure?" asked Baby Bear, anxiously.

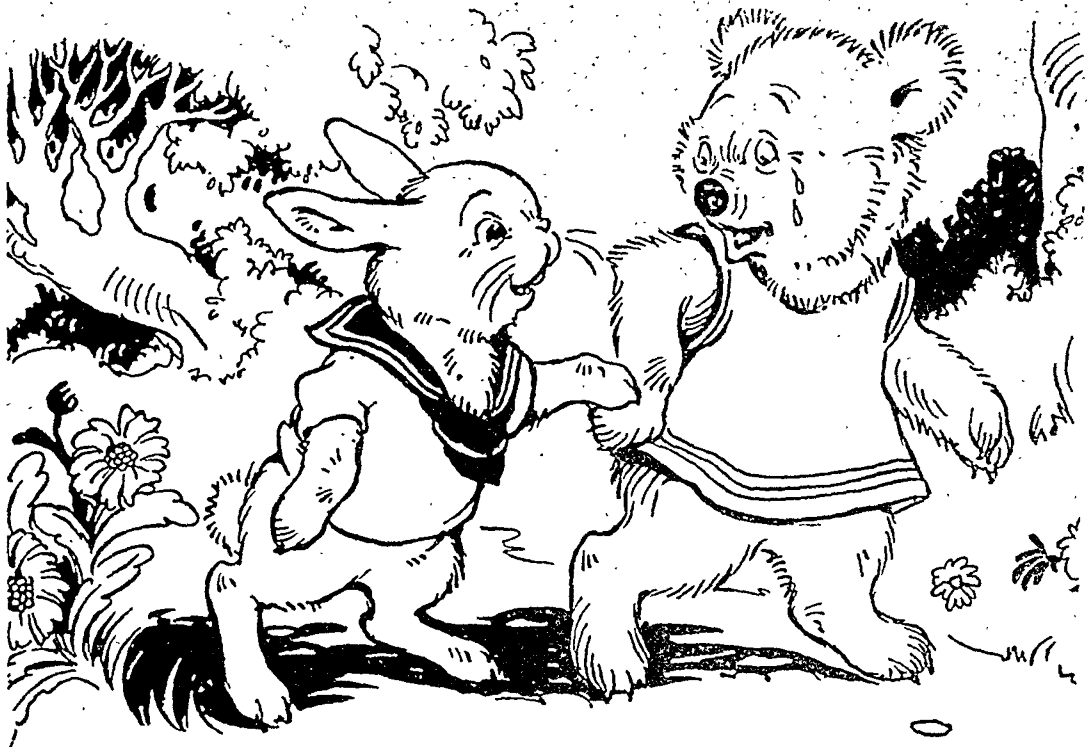
"Yes, I am nearly sure. Come along, we'll go now."

At this, Baby Bear jumped up, took Baby Bunny's paw, and the two set off down the lane.

In a little while they came to a pretty, wee house.

"Is that your house, Baby Bear?" asked Baby Bunny. Baby Bear looked inside, then he shook his head sadly.

"Oh no, that's not my house, that's not my



Mammy Bear." And soon they came to another little, wee house.

"Is that your house, Baby Bear?" asked Baby Bunny.

Baby Bear looked inside, then he shook his head, sadly. "Oh no, that's not my house, that's not my Mammy Bear."

At last they came to another house, and this time Baby Bear began to sniff, and sniff.

"That's my house," he cried excitedly. "I can smell the honey pie."

And he ran straight inside the house, right into Mammy Bear's arms.



"My Baby Bear," she cried. "Where hav
you been, and who is this with you?"
"This is Baby Bunny; he brought me hom
and he wants some honey pie."
Mrs. Bear lifted Baby Bear into a high chai
at the table, then she lifted Baby Bunny int
another high chair.
Then she brought out the big honey pie
and put it on the table, and gave them each
big helpings.
When he had finished eating his pie, Baby
Bunny thanked Mrs. Bear, and said that he
must be going home.

And Baby Bear said, "Please come to-morrow," and Mrs. Bear said, "Please do." Mrs. Bear and Baby Bear stood at the door, and watched Baby Bunny going bobbity-bobbity-bobbity-bob right across the field, until he was out of sight.

"I am so tired, Mammy Bear," cried Baby Bear. "Please put me to bed."

So Mrs. Bear put Baby Bear into his little cot, and told him she would make him another honey pie the next day if he promised to be a very good little bear and never, never leave his home again.

D. L. LINDEN





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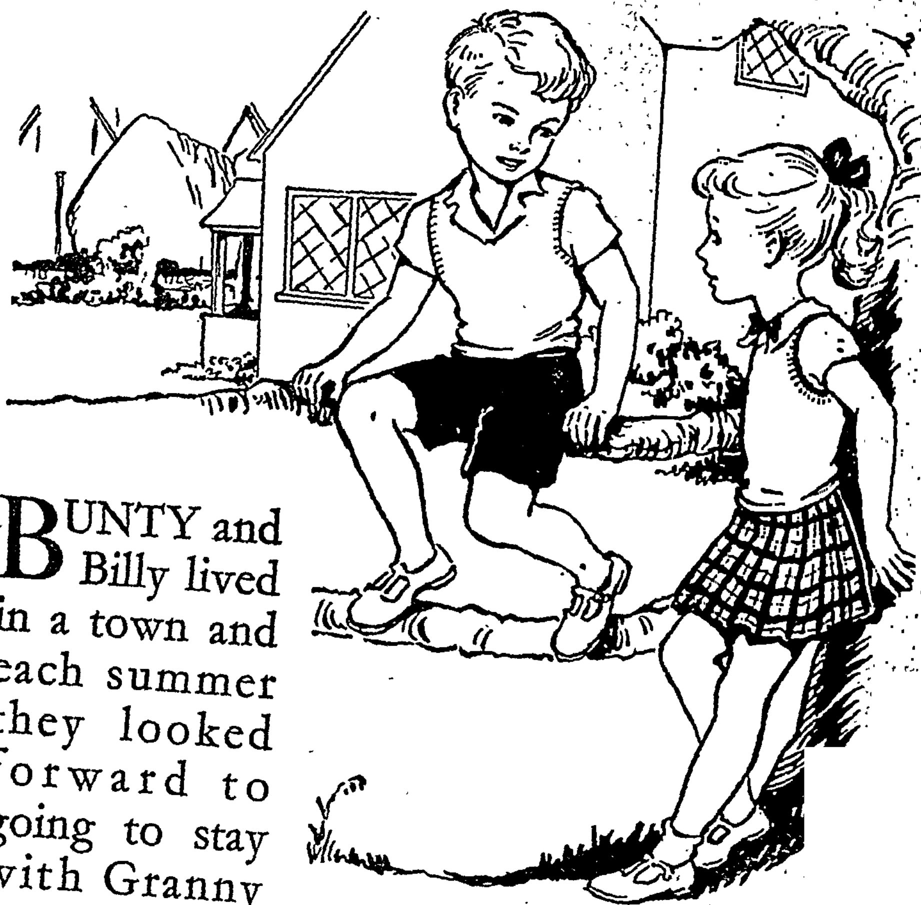
"I am so tired, Mammy Bear," cried Baby Bear. "Please put me to bed."

So Mrs. Bear put Baby Bear into his little cot, and told him she would make him another honey pie the next day if he promised to be a very good little bear and never, never leave his home again.

D. L. LINDEN



A LOVELY HOLIDAY



BUNTY and Billy lived in a town and each summer they looked forward to going to stay with Granny on her farm in the country.

"I do wish we lived here *always*," said Bunty one lovely summer morning.

"So do I," said Billy, sighing. "I love the flowers and the grass and the dear little birds."

One afternoon, John, the shepherd, came

into the farm kitchen and said that one of the lambs was missing.

"Can we come and look for it?" said Billy, and John nodded his head.

"Yes," he said. "A nice little lamb she is, and we must find her before dark."

They searched the green hillside for ages, but no trace of the little lamb could they find. Bunty was almost in tears. Then she gave a cry. "Look! There's something white in those bushes over there," and John sent Sally, the sheep-dog, off across the field.



By the time the others caught up with Sally she was gently pulling the lost lamb from a tangle of brier and bramble.

John stooped down and helped her, then he put the little lambkin over his shoulder and they set off home again. Bunty stroked the lamb's soft black nose and told it that everything was all right now and it would soon be with its mother again.



When they got home, Granny was waiting with some warm milk in a bottle. She held it out to the lamb and it began to drink it thirstily. "And as it was Bunty who found

her I'm going to give her this little lamb for her very own," said Granny, smiling. "Here, hold the bottle, my dear."



"Oh, Granny, thank you!" cried Bunty, taking the bottle from her. "I'll call her Brambleberry, 'cos she was in the brambles when we found her." And then her face fell. "Oh dear, we can't take her home with us, and when we come next year she'll be grown up."

"You wait and see," said Granny, and smiled. "Now come and have your tea."

Billy and Bunty had lots of fun playing with Brambleberry, and soon she would follow them all over the fields like a little woolly white dog.

When the holidays were over, Mummy and Daddy came to the farm to take them home.

"But we're going to stay over the week-

end," said Mummy, "and tomorrow Daddy and I are going to show you something. It's a surprise!"

Bunty and Billy could hardly get to sleep that night wondering what the surprise was going to be, and then, after breakfast, they all set off across the fields in the direction of Old Mill Farm—a dear little white house that had been empty for some weeks. Once it had been a fine farm, but the farmer had gone away and now the house was empty.

"Well, how would you like to live here?" said Daddy, as they reached Old Mill Farm and the children gazed at him in surprise.

"Live here?" cried Bunty. "Oh, Daddy we'd love to—wouldn't we, Billy?"

"We would," cried Billy, "and then we could have Brambleberry to live with us, too."

"Well, we're *going* to live here, darlings," said Mummy. "Daddy is going to be a farmer and you're going to stay at Granny's while Daddy and I see about getting the furniture and things moved from town," and Billy and Bunty agreed that this was the loveliest summer holiday they had ever had!

AILEEN E. PASSMORE

THE ROYAL FAVOURITES



OLD Mrs. Muffet felt very sad. She had opened her little sweet shop at the end of the village street more than a week ago; but although the big round window was filled with delicious things to eat, no one had been to buy a single sweetmeat, for a man called Mr. Grig had opened a sweetshop at the other end of the village street on the very same day, and he sold ice-cream and ginger-pop as well!

"Oh dear!" sighed poor Mrs. Muffet. "I

shall have to close my little shop again, and I did so want to stay here in this dear little village." And then she gave a start—surely that was someone crying?

The sound was coming from the wood behind her shop, and Mrs. Muffet hurried across the piece of grass that bordered the little fir wood.

Going into the little fir wood was like going into a deep green pool after the bright sunlight outside, and for a minute or two Mrs. Muffet could hardly see anything at all. Then she heard the crying again, much louder this time, and as she became used to the cool, greeny-gold light she made out the figures of two children standing hand in hand beside a tall fir tree.

"What is the matter, my dears?" she asked, trotting over to them, and the little girl stopped crying and said:

"P-please, we're lost! We've been in the wood for ages and ages and we can't find the way out."

"Will you take us home?" asked the little boy, wiping away his tears with a pretty blue hanky.

"Why, of course I will," said old Mrs. Muffet. "But where do you live?"

"In the royal castle over the hills," said the little girl. "We ran away!" And she started to cry again.

"My goodness gracious me, you must be the little prince and princess!" cried Mrs. Muffet. "Why, the Lord Chamberlain came into the village this morning and told everyone that you had wandered away. I wonder



why they didn't think to look in the wood."

"I expect we were in the old windmill up on the hill then," said the little princess.

"Then I must take you home again at once," said old Mrs. Muffet, "but first I must lock my shop door."

When the prince and princess saw the dear little sweetshop and the lovely sweets they gave cries of delight and clapped their hands together, and before they started off to the royal castle Mrs. Muffet gave them each a big bag filled with her most delicious sweetmeats.

The king and queen were overjoyed when they saw the children, and the queen wanted to make old Mrs. Muffet a duchess there and then; but old Mrs. Muffet said she would rather remain just old Mrs. Muffet, and after she had had a cup of royal tea in one of the best royal tea-cups the Lord Chamberlain took her back to her little shop in one of the finest of the king's coaches, and the little prince and princess waved to her till the coach was out of sight.

On their way home old Mrs. Muffet told the Lord Chamberlain all about having to



leave her little shop, and he said he was very very sorry.

Next morning old Mrs. Muffett was wakened up by the sound of someone hammering and knocking outside her bedroom window, and when she got out of bed and opened the window and looked out she nearly fell into the village street in surprise.

There were two of the royal servants carefully hanging up the royal coat of arms over the little shop doorway, and over the coat of arms was another sign that said: BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT—which meant that the king

and queen had made old Mrs. Muffet's little shop one of their own special sweetshops.

And now folk come from far and near to buy the delicious sweetmeats which old Mrs. Muffet gave to the little prince and princess and which are now called, by special request of the king and queen, "Royal Favourites", and every Sunday afternoon old Mrs. Muffet goes in one of the King's coaches to have tea with the little prince and princess at the royal castle at the top of the high green hill!

AILEEN E. PASSMORE



BINKIE BUNNY CHOOSES A LETTUCE



BINKIE BUNNY lived in a cosy little house under the ground.

He was a fat little bunny with a soft grey coat, a white tail that bobbed up and down, two bright black eyes and a pink nose that was always twitching.

"Binkie," said his mummy one morning, "your Uncle Frisky is coming to dinner, so I want you to run to Farmer Hare's and buy the biggest lettuce he has." And she popped sixpence into his little paw and gave him the shopping basket.

Binkie ran off swinging his basket

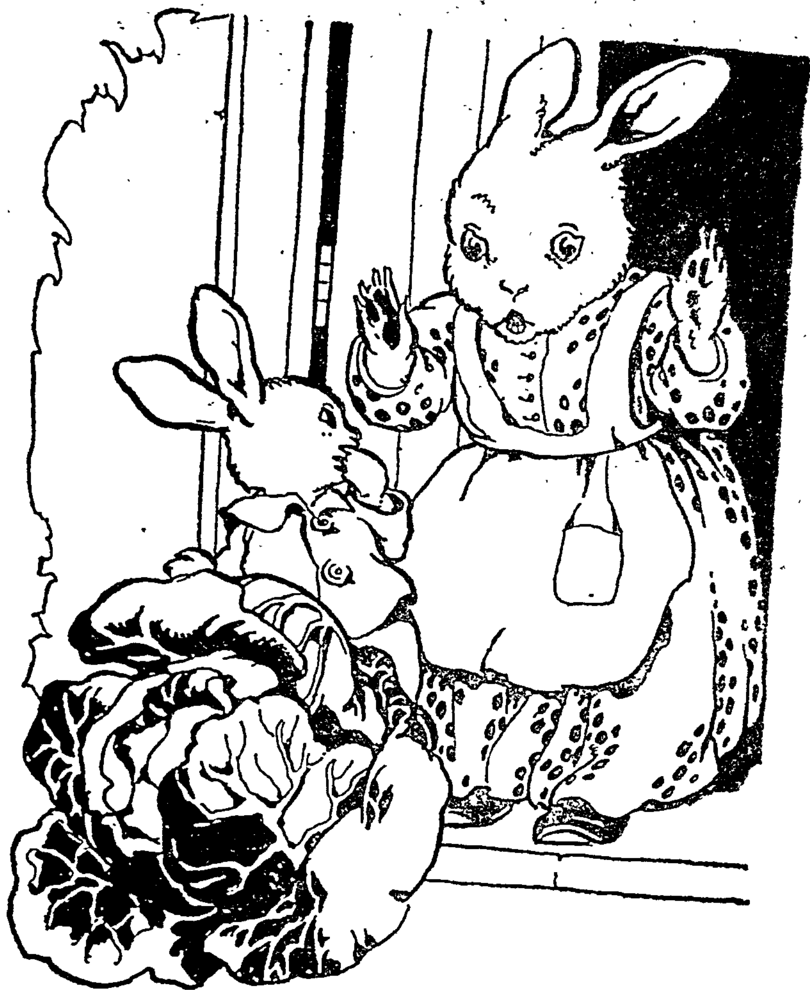
he came to Farmer Hare's fields there was no one about.

"I mustn't go home without the lettuce," he said to himself, "so perhaps I had better take one." And he ran up and down, and in and out among the lettuces, to see which was the biggest.

At one end of the field the lettuces were very small, and Binkie passed them with scarcely a glance, but up at the other end of the field were big, green, glossy plants, some almost as big as Binkie himself.

"Ah!" cried Binkie. "Here's a beauty."





And he pulled and tugged and nibbled at the stalk, until up came the root and over went Binkie with the lettuce on top of him. He soon picked himself up and, brushing the soil off his little pink nose, put the sixpence his mummy had given him on the ground where Farmer Hare would be sure to see it.

His lovely lettuce was too big to go in the shopping basket, so he set off for

dragging it behind him and thinking how pleased his mummy and Uncle Frisky would be when they saw it, and what a clever bunny they would think him.

But when his mummy did see it she threw up her paws in dismay, for it wasn't a lettuce at all but a cabbage.

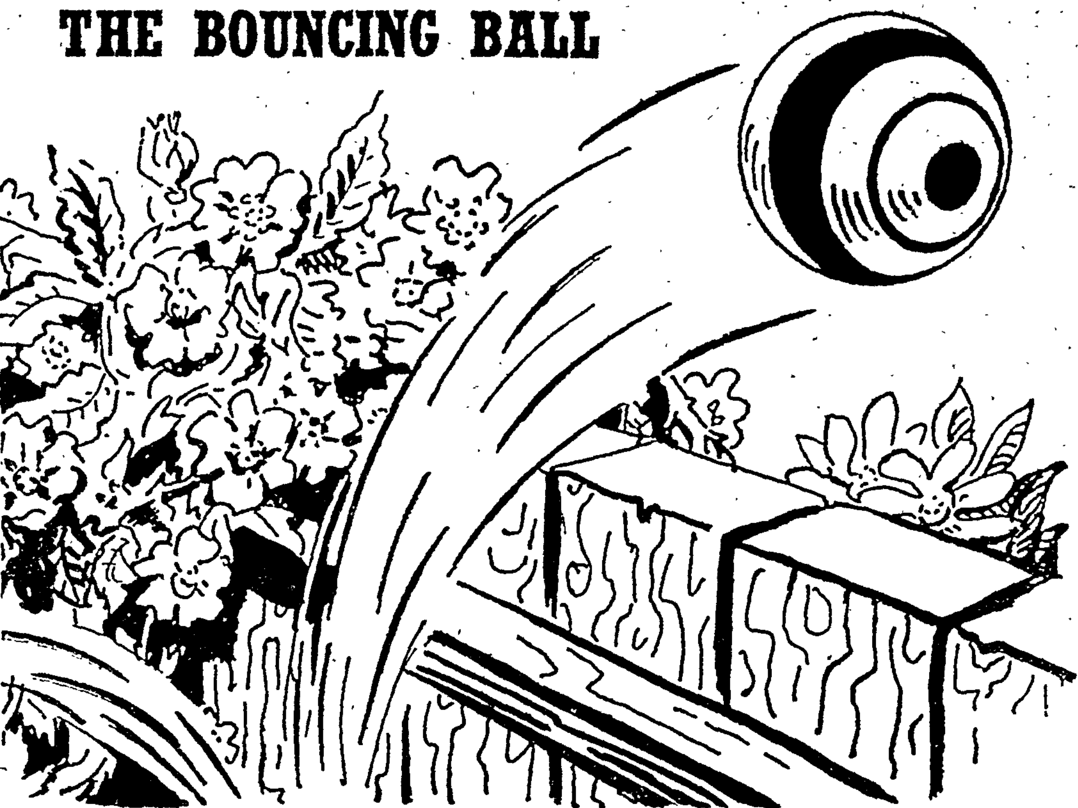
Binkie didn't feel so clever then, because he knew that only the inside of a cabbage was nice and tender, and Uncle Frisky, being a visitor, would of course have to have it, while he and his sister and brother ate the outside leaves.

Now, as it happened, Uncle Frisky was very fond of cabbage, and when he learned that Binkie had dragged it all the way from Farmer Hare's he patted him on the head and said what a strong bunny he was, and he gave Binkie sixpence to take his brother and sister to Mr. Squirrel's playground.

Off scampered the bunnies, their little white tails bobbing up and down, and what a lovely afternoon they spent on Mr. Squirrel's swings.

JULIA M. COOKSON

THE BOUNCING BALL



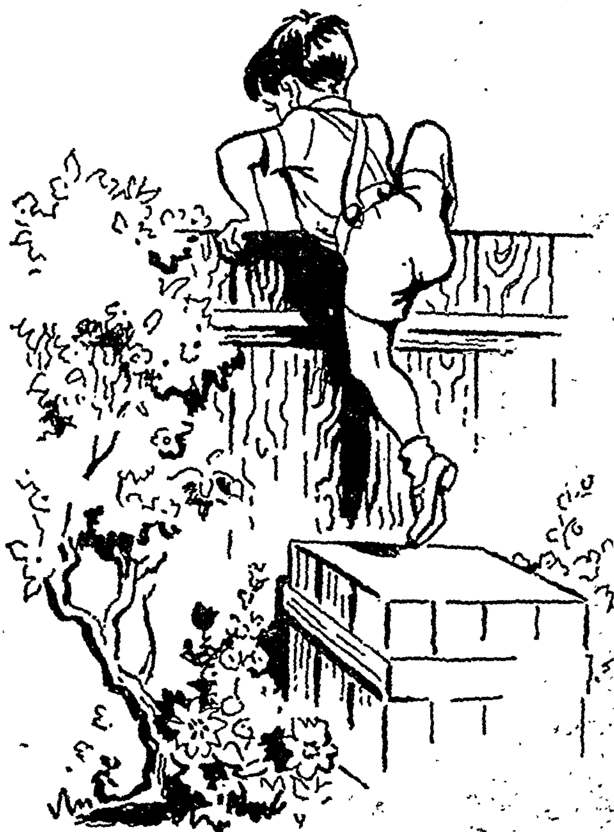
IT was a grand ball. It had several bright-coloured rings round it, and Richard loved to see it bounce into the air and flash its colours when it fell. But the trouble was that it bounced too much. Before its owner could stop it, that ball would bounce right over the fence into the next-door garden.

The first time this happened all was well. Richard climbed on to a box left by the man who did jobs in the garden and then wriggled over the fence, got his ball and managed to scramble back again without anyone seeing

him. Then he promised himself that he would be more careful in future.

"You behave yourself, ball," he said to the ball, "or you'll get me into trouble."

That very afternoon the stupid ball did it again. With a bounce it was over the fence, and this time Richard heard a man say: "Bother that boy! He's ruined that plant." The boy tried to get indoors before the old gentleman next door could see him, but there



was no time. "Hey!" called out the man. "Richard!"

"Y-yes, Mr. Smith!" mumbled the boy.

"Is this your ball?" asked the man.

Richard tried to look surprised at the ball being in the next-door man's hands. "Yes, Mr. Smith," he said. "It is a very good bouncer."

"Nonsense," snapped the man. "The trouble is that you're careless." Then he threw the ball into Richard's garden. And what *do* you think happened? The ball bounced right back again just to show that its owner was right.

"You see, Mr. Smith!" cried Richard. "I told you it was a good bouncer."

"Maybe it is," said Mr. Smith, "but if it comes over again I shall keep it. You understand?"

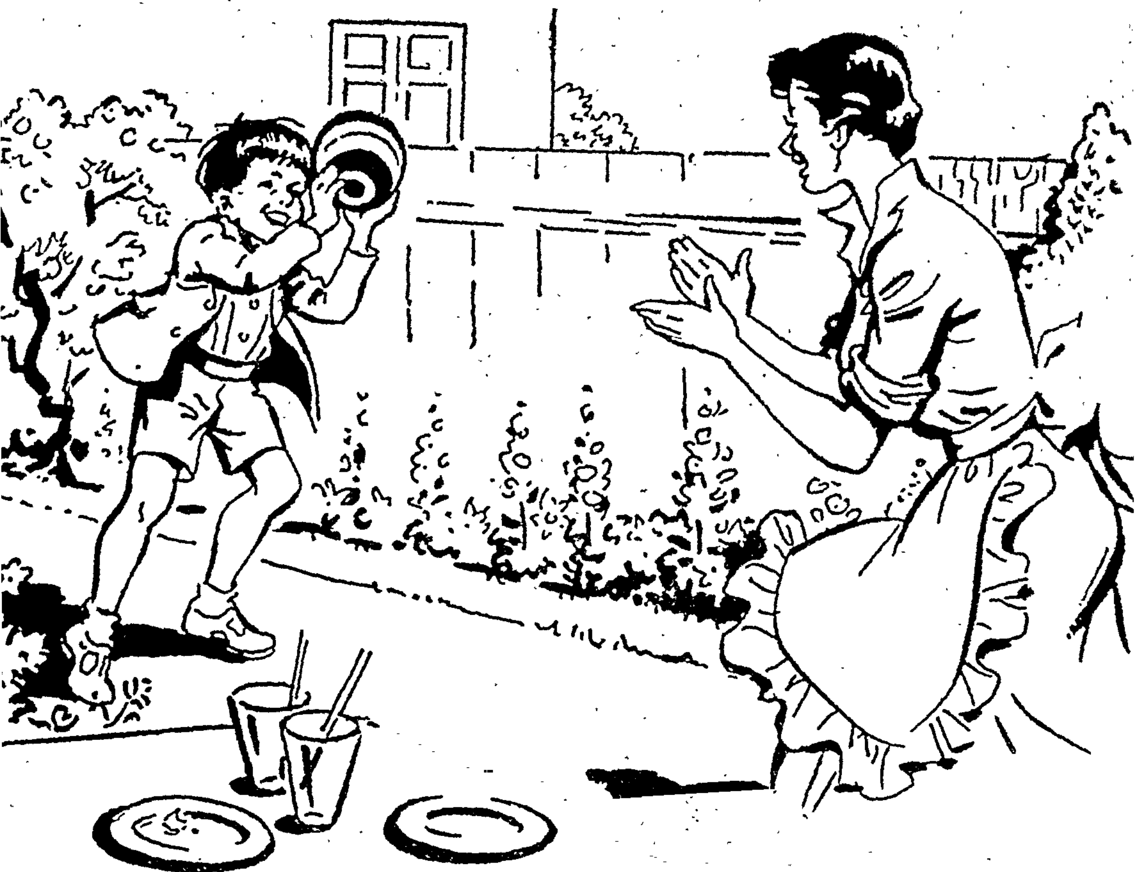
Richard said that he did understand. He promised faithfully to be very, very careful in future. And he was careful. He played on the other side of the garden, he didn't throw the ball too high, and once, when it nearly went over, he didn't bounce it at all for the rest of the afternoon.

"Oh, Mummy," he said when he had been tucked up in bed that night, "if only I had someone to play with. Then we could throw the ball to each other."

His mother sighed. "Yes, dear, I know," she said, "but Johnny won't be home for another two weeks. You must be careful, that's all. I'll tell you what," she went on. "If I get my work done early tomorrow morning I'll come out and play with you. How's that?"

That, of course, was fine, and, sure enough, just after Richard and his mother had had a cake and something to drink in the middle of the morning the next day, there were the two of them playing with the ball. They had a grand game and for the first time since his friend Johnny had gone away to stay with his grandfather, Richard really enjoyed himself. But, of course, all good things come to an end at last.

"I must go in now, Richard!" called out his mummy. "Here. Catch!" And she threw the ball towards him. But the boy wasn't ready to catch it. He missed by several feet. The ball bounced high in the air and then



over the next-door fence it went. His mother didn't even see it go because she had already gone indoors, hurrying to get the dinner ready.

"Oh!" gasped Richard. "What shall I do?" And he waited for Mr. Smith to appear over the fence.

"Tut-tut!" said the man at last, when he did appear holding the ball. "What can I do to stop you throwing this ball into my garden, Richard?"



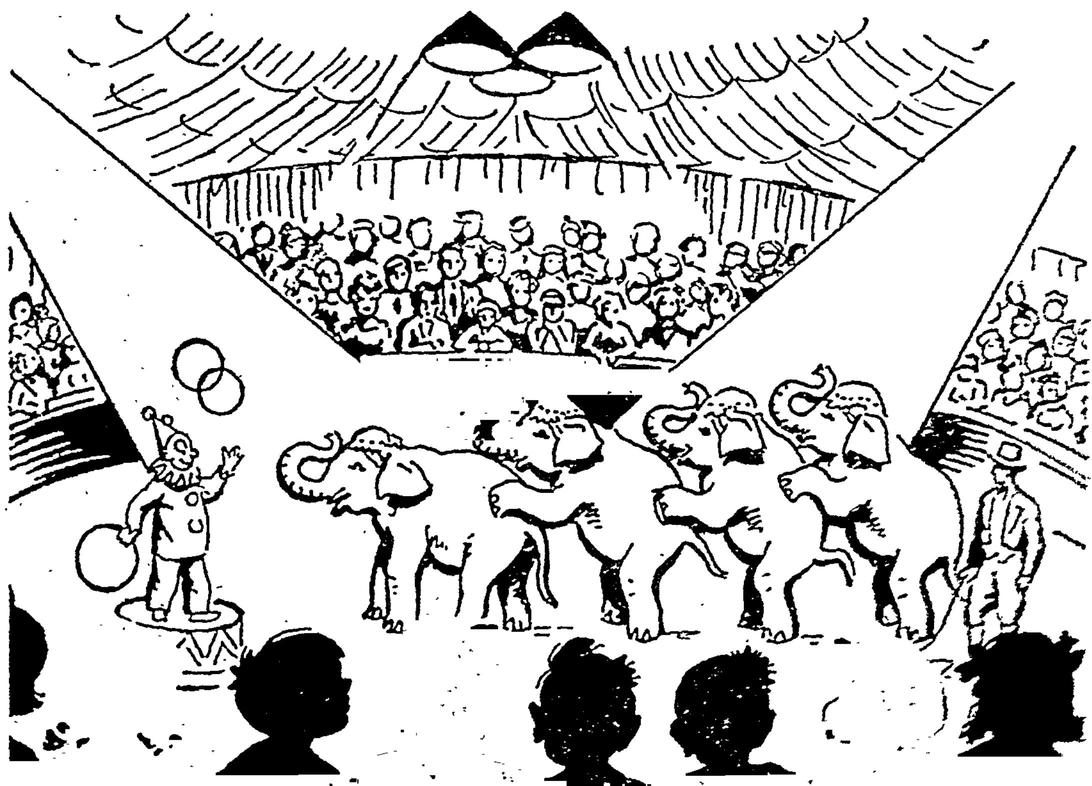
Richard couldn't possibly tell the old gentleman that his mother had thrown the ball over the fence. "I—I don't know, Mr. Smith!" he mumbled.

Then the man smiled. "Well, I do!" he said. The smile grew wider. "I can invite you to come into my garden and play. You see, Richard, I've got my grandson Peter staying with me. Here he is!" And he lifted up a boy of about Richard's own age. "Come

on," he said, "climb on to that old box and I'll help you over. It's better than going right round by the road, isn't it?"

"Oh yes!" shrilled Richard, and a moment later he was over the fence and having a marvellous game with the old gentleman's grandson. What was more, he played with Peter all the time that boy stayed with his grandfather. Yes, and they went out for walks with Mr. Smith, and even went to the circus when it visited the town. All because his ball was *such* a wonderful bouncer.

ARTHUR GROOM





THE Christmas Tree Fairy could not under-stand it at all. She was sitting on the top of the Christmas tree in her sparkling frock, enjoying the fun as much as the children. She heard everyone say how pretty she was. She saw Molly and her friends get such jolly presents.

"I wonder who I shall belong to when the party is over," the Christmas Tree Fairy said quietly to herself.

Molly had a box of paints; her Cousin Peter had a pencil box; drawing books, crayons, bags of sweets, trumpets, drums, tea-sets, dolls and other jolly things were all given to somebody or other.

But the Christmas Tree Fairy was not given to anybody at all. It really seemed most queer.

And now the nursery was empty. The twinkling lights on the tree were dimmed, and still the little fairy doll was perched on the top-most branch, wondering what was to happen next.

"You'll be put in a box until next year," said a sharp voice. It belonged to a green glass ball that had been kept carefully for many, many years.

"We Christmas Trimmings have to put up with things like that. It's very dull, I can tell you, lying in a dark box till *next* Christmas," added the green glass ball in a *very* dull way indeed.

Poor little Christmas Tree Fairy! At the thought of being put into a dark box she felt like crying. But what was that? Click. Somebody had turned the nursery light on. It was



Molly's mummy. Molly was there too, and her Cousin Peter. He had his out-of-door clothes on, all ready to go home.

Then suddenly snip! went the scissors as they cut the pretty tinsel ribbon that tied the Christmas Tree Fairy so very firmly to the top of the tree.

The dollie's heart went pit-a-pat with fright.

Oh dear, what was going to happen now?

But Molly's mummy was speaking to Cousin Peter.

"There you are, my dear. Take the little lady home to Marjorie and tell her we are so

sorry she could not come to the party and we hope she will soon be better."

Peter was holding the Christmas Tree Fairy very tightly now. She had her first ride in a car, and in a very short time she knew she was really going to belong to somebody at last.

To Marjorie, Peter's sister, who was ill in bed with a terrible cold. She was sitting up in bed, with a very pink face and very bright eyes and looking rather miserable. But when



Marjorie saw the Christmas Tree Fairy she was as pleased as pleased can be.

"Oh, you lovely dollie," Marjorie cried in a very husky voice.

"I thought Molly might send me something off the Christmas tree, but I never guessed it would be anything as lovely as you."

So the little Christmas Tree Fairy was happy once more. And if she could speak, I am sure she would say how thankful she is not to have been put away in a horrid dark box until next Christmas.

DORIS M. LEE



JENNIFER'S AWFUL JERSEY



ONE Sunny morning a parcel came for Jennifer. It was very exciting to have a parcel, and Jennifer could hardly wait to get it undone.

Inside was a jersey for Jennifer and a note for Mother. They were from Great-Aunt Edith. The note said: "I got this wool in a sale and I knitted it up for Jennifer. I thought

it would make a warm jersey to wear to school."

Mother and Jennifer looked at the jersey for a moment without saying anything. Then Jennifer burst into tears.

"I couldn't wear *that*," she sobbed. "It's *dreadful*!"

For the jersey was just the colour of *mud*!

Mother couldn't pretend that it wasn't dreadful, because it *was*.

"Perhaps we can do something to brighten it up," she said. "You could wear your pretty blue beads on it, Jennifer."

"I wouldn't wear my





pretty b-blue b-beads on *that*!" sobbed Jennifer.

"Or I could embroider some little animals round it," said Mother.

"I don't want my animals on *that*!" sobbed Jennifer.

"But it's lovely and warm for cold days, darling," said Mother.

"I don't want to be warm in *that*!" sobbed Jennifer.

"Well, we won't worry about it just now," said Mother. "Perhaps we shall think of something else."

Mother tidied away the paper and string and then she ran upstairs with the jersey and popped it on the spare-room bed. And she wondered and *wondered* what she could do to make it so that Jennifer would like wearing it.

Jennifer soon forgot about her jersey, because in the afternoon Gillian and her puppy

came to be looked after while Gillian's mother went out.

They all had such a game in the garden that the puppy got quite tired out, and when Mother called the children in to tea he just flopped down on the kitchen rug and went off to sleep. So they left him there while they went into the dining-room to have tea.

They had nearly finished tea when Jennifer's mother said:

"Isn't your puppy good, Gillian. Most puppies come and worry for something to eat at meal times."

"Scamp does too," said Gillian, "nearly always, unless he's up to mischief."

Just as Gillian said that the door, which wasn't shut, was pushed open a little wider and in came the funniest little object. It seemed to be mostly the colour of—MUD!

They all stared at it, and then Gillian cried: "Oh, *Scamp*—what *have* you got on?"

"It's my jersey that Great-Aunt Edith sent me," cried Jennifer. And she didn't sound a bit sorry!

"I left it on the spare-room bed," said Mother, "and I suppose I didn't shut the door."

By this time both the children were laughing, for Scamp *did* look funny. His head wasn't sticking out of the neck of the jersey. He had eaten a big hole in the front and his head was sticking out of *that*!

"Poor little thing!" said Mother. "I suppose he got himself inside the jersey and then he couldn't get out. I'm sure he'll be very glad to have it off."

So they wriggled the jersey off, and Scamp looked very pleased to be out of it. He wagged his tail and shook himself well—and then he had a whole chocolate biscuit.

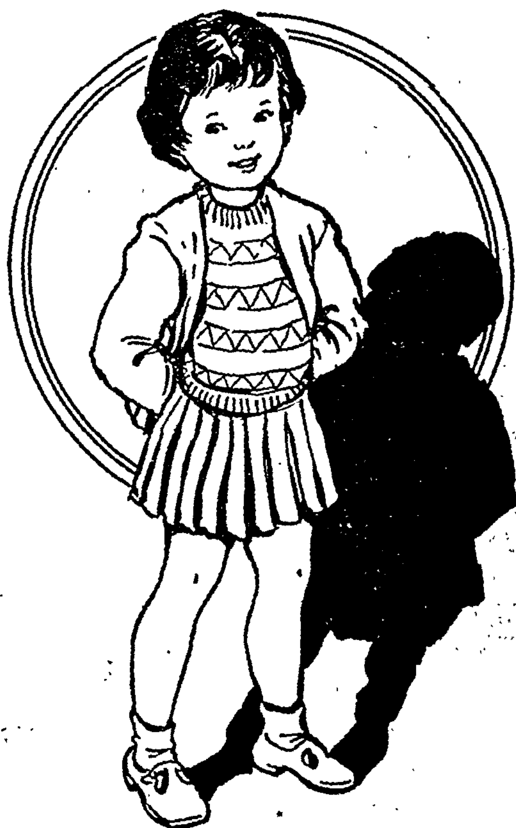


"I won't be able to wear my jersey now will I?" said Jennifer.

"Not like this," said Mother, as she held i up, "but Scamp has given me an idea, Jennifei If I knit a new front in some wool of a nic colour you could wear the jersey under a littl jacket and none of the ugly part would show."

But don't tell Great-Aunt Edith!

CHRISTINE E. BRADLEY



THE ALARM CLOCK'S DAY



"BR-RR-RR!" rang the alarm clock.

"Oh, bother!" cried Bobby crossly. He snatched up the clock and flung it into the farthest corner of the room, where it fell with a loud *bump*!

"Oh, Bobby," cried his twin, Betty, jumping out of bed, "look what you have done . . . the poor clock!"

"I don't care," said naughty Bobby, as he snuggled under the bedclothes again. "Horrid old clock always waking me up."

Betty ran to the corner and picked up the clock. It had a big dent in it and its glass was cracked across.

"Oh dear!" she cried. "I do believe it's stopped!"

She held it up to her ear, but there was not even the faintest tick to be heard.

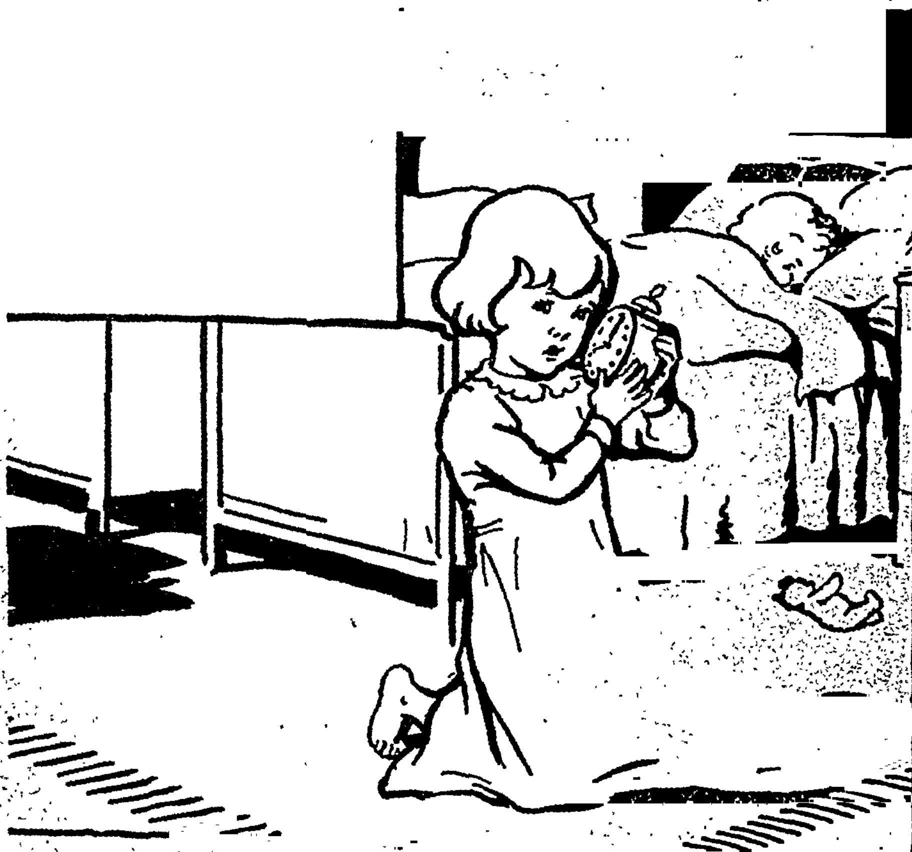
She tried winding it up and shaking it,

but it was no use . . . the clock would not go at all.

That day both Bobby and Betty were late for breakfast, and the next day Jack, their big brother, woke them.

"Come on . . . up you get!" he shouted, roughly pulling Bobby out of bed.

Bobby was very cross, but he could not treat Jack as he had done the clock.



He began to wish he had not been so unkind to it.

Then, one day, the twins had a letter from their auntie asking them to spend a day at the sea-side with her.

"Oh, Mummy, may we go?" they cried together.

"Yes, darlings," said their mother. "But only *if* you can wake up in time. No one is to call you. You have been late so often, now see what you can do. You will have to get up at seven so that you can catch the early bus!"

The twins looked sadly at each other . . . how would they ever wake up?

"If only the clock would go," sighed Betty, when they were going to bed.

No one noticed the old clock give a very faint "Tick!"

"Now perhaps they will see the use of me," he thought. "They will never wake without me."

That night Betty kept dreaming that she ran for the bus and each time she missed it and Bobby was chased round and round the nursery by a giant clock.



At seven next morning they were fast asleep. The only sound in the room was a "Tick! Tick!" on the mantelpiece.

Five-past seven . . . ten-past seven . . . a quarter-past seven . . . the old clock, who was really very kind-hearted, could bear it no longer.

"Br-rr-rr!" he rang.

The twins jumped out of bed quicker than they had ever done before.

"Oh, Bobby, the clock!" cried Betty.

"We shall be just in time if we hurry,"

shouted Bobby joyfully. "But . . . I say . . . when did it start going?"

"I don't know," said Betty, puzzled.

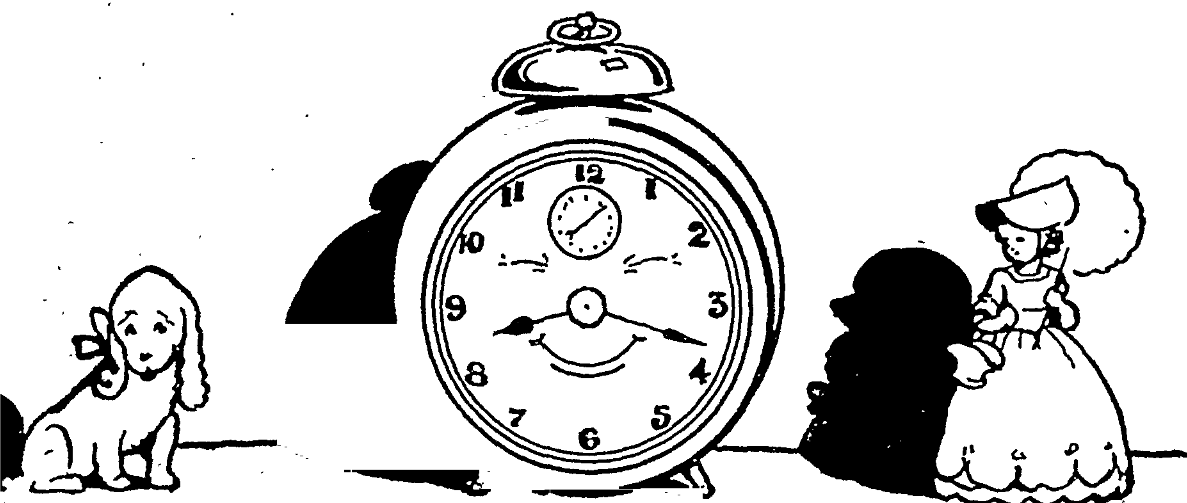
They dressed quickly, ran down to breakfast and were soon in the bus on their way to the sea.

"We should never have caught the bus if the clock hadn't waked us. I'll never treat it badly again! Good old clock!" said Bobby.

"I never thought the twins would wake in time," said their mother. "I wonder how they did it?"

Upstairs the old clock smiled as he ticked softly to himself.

CECILY M. DRURY



WILLIE WHITE PIG

A FAMILY of pigs lived in a large and comfortable sty in one of Farmer Brown's fields. They were all very happy and contented except Willie, the white one.

His brothers and sisters had black patches of various sizes and shapes, but Willie was all white from the tip of his funny little snout to the last hair at the end of his curly tail. He really was a very handsome little pig and should have been very happy and proud of himself, but he couldn't bear being fussed over, and his mother fussed over him from morning till night. Ever since the day she heard Farmer Brown say: "That little white fella is the best of the bunch," she could not leave him alone.

All day long it was "Don't do that, Willie, you'll get dirty", or "Come here, Willie, and let Mother clean your ears", or "You've run about enough, Willie, come and sit down with me and let your brothers and sisters see that you are as good as you are handsome",

"I wish I was black all over like that," he said to himself. "Then I'd never have to worry about keeping clean and not doing this that or the other."

"What did you say?" asked the pig nearest to him.

"I said I wished I was black all over like you," replied Willie. "Then I could play about as much as I liked without getting dirty."

"Without showing the dirt so much, you mean," contradicted the other.

"Same thing," retorted Willie.

"But do you really mean that?"

"Mean what?" asked Willie.

"About wanting to be black like us."

"Of course I do," said Willie crossly. "Think of the fun you have, while I'm not allowed to do a single thing I like."

"Well, that's easily put right," grunted the black pig, and turned to his companions who had gathered round. "I say, you chaps," he said, "this little pig wants to be black, what about it?"

"There's an old tin of black paint over there by the shed," said one.

"And a brush," said another.

"I'll do it, I can paint," added a third.

Willie didn't know quite what was happening, but he found himself surrounded by the family of black pigs all talking at once, and in less time than it takes to tell he was completely blacked over. This was grand, nothing mattered now, he could get as grubby as he liked and no one would say anything to him.

Presently, however, he began to feel tired and hungry, the black pigs were rather rough, and although he'd enjoyed himself he was very glad he had a home to go back to. So he said goodbye and set off.

Reaching the sty door he called out: "Hullo, Mother, I'm back again."

"Oh, Willie, where have you been?" cried Mrs. Pig rushing out at the sound of his voice. "I have . . ." She stopped suddenly. "Who are you?" she demanded. "I thought it was Willie."

"I *am* Willie," he replied.

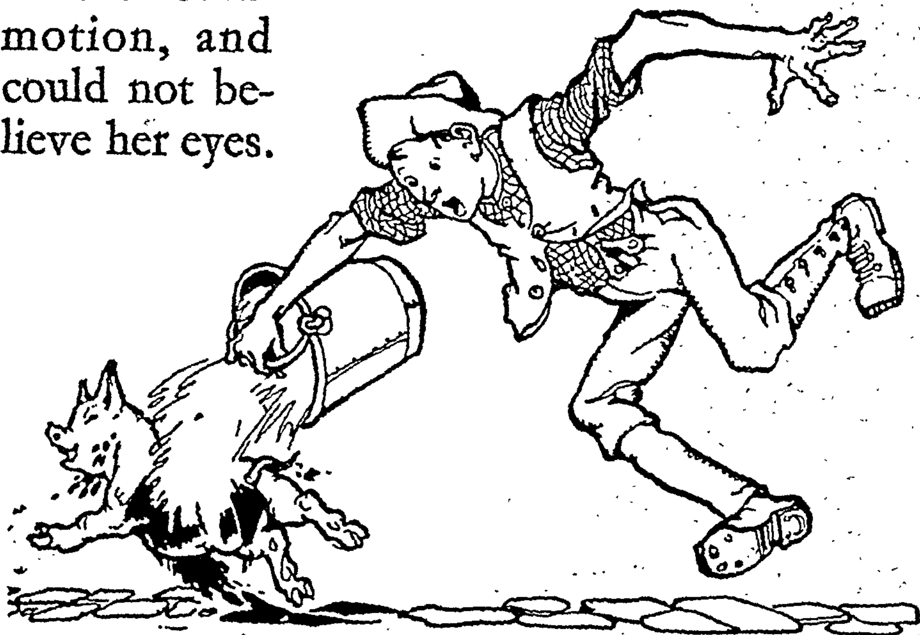
"Nonsense," retorted his mother. "Willie is a white pig, a beautiful white pig, and you're as black as soot. Oh dear!" She began to cry. "What has happened to my poor

Willie? If only he'll come back I'll never fuss again, he shall do just as he likes. Go away, you horrid black pig," she finished and turned away.

What would have happened I don't know, but just at that moment one of the farm boys came along carrying a pail of water, and Willie had a brilliant idea.

"Mother," he shouted, and ran in front of the farm boy who tripped over and went sprawling on the ground, at the same time upsetting the pail of water all over Willie.

Mrs. Pig turned back suddenly at the sound of the commotion, and could not believe her eyes.



There was the little black pig she had just sent away *and he wasn't black at all*, the water had washed all the black paint off.

"Willie!" she gasped. "What have you been up to? Come here at once." And the poor little pig sobbed out the whole story.

Mrs. Pig was so pleased to have him back again she didn't even scold him, and now he is the happiest little pig there is, and very, very proud of himself.

JOCELYN SHOLTO

MY PICTURE BOOK

My window is a picture book,
And all day long I look
At the lovely, living pictures
In my wondrous picture book.
Sometimes I see two little dogs
That frolic side by side.
Sometimes a little boy and girl
Off for a cycle ride.
There are heaps and heaps of pictures
To look at every day,
Till Mummy draws the curtains
And puts the book away!

A. E. PASSMORE

THE STORY OF BELINDA BLUE EYES

POOR Belinda Blue Eyes was feeling very sorry for herself, for she was the oldest doll in the nursery and was looking very shabby. There had been a time when she was beautiful, but her face had been scrubbed and scrubbed until it was all blotchy. One eye had been nearly scrubbed out, the other was not as blue as it had once been, and instead of the head of lovely curly red hair she once had, there were only nine red hairs. What made matters worse, she knew that tomorrow would be her little mistress Ann's birthday, and although Ann loved her very much, she knew also that there would be two newcomers to the nursery—a lovely baby doll and a very grand French doll, with long hair and two lovely blue eyes that opened and shut, so she really should try and make herself look smart. But what could she do?

Belinda Blue Eyes sat in the toy cupboard

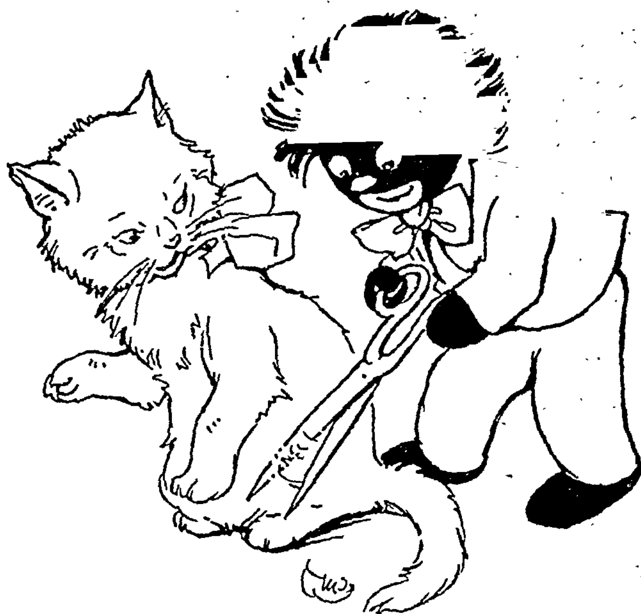
and thought very hard, but couldn't think of one single thing she could do to make herself beautiful.

"What is the matter?" asked Ginger Cat, strolling into the toy cupboard and seeing Belinda Blue Eyes' glum face. Belinda Blue Eyes looked at Ginger Cat and started to cry.

"I don't know what to do," she sobbed. "All these smart new people coming into the nursery tomorrow and here am I, with only one good eye, a few hairs and a scrubbed face."

All the other toys in the toy cupboard





stopped talking and looked at Belinda Blue Eyes. They felt sorry for her, for she did look rather a mess really. Golliwog sat up and looked at Belinda thoughtfully. "If only I could get some hair," he said, "I would make you a wig."

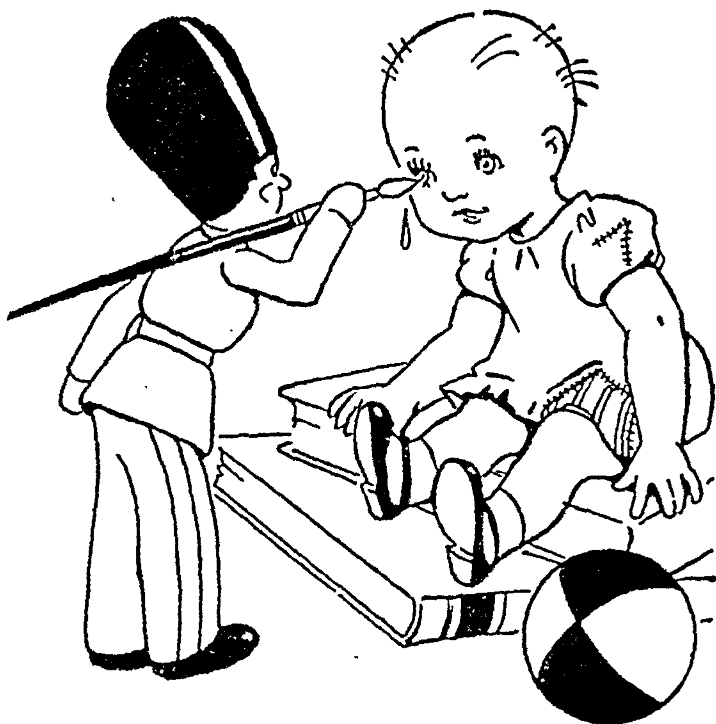
"Well," said Ginger Cat excitedly, "my fur is ginger, not quite your colour, Belinda, but if Golliwog could make you a wig out of that, you are welcome to have some of it."

"And I can paint," said Toy Soldier, jumping up, "and could paint in another blue eye,

but I'm afraid I can't do much with your face."

"Never mind," said Belinda Blue Eyes, drying her tears. "If only I could have some new hair and a new eye it would help."

"That's all right then," said Ginger Cat, "we'll get to work. Come on, Golliwog. A little bit off near the tail. Not too much because I don't want to catch cold." Golliwog picked up the scissors and set to work on Ginger Cat, and Belinda Blue Eyes sat perfectly still while Toy Soldier painted in a lovely new blue eye—in fact it was bluer than



the other eye—and Golliwog set to work making a wig. Ginger Cat looked a bit bald near the tail, but he didn't mind.

At last the wig was ready and Belinda Blue Eyes put it on. It was a perfect fit. Belinda Blue Eyes looked at herself in the glass. She really looked very nice and felt much better. Dutch Doll lent her a frock which fitted her very well. That night the wig and the frock were put away carefully and Belinda Blue Eyes went to bed feeling a much happier doll.

The next day Ann came into the nursery bringing with her her new dolls. The baby doll was very sweet, but the French doll looked very proud. Ann was so excited over it being her birthday that she didn't notice Belinda Blue Eyes' new wig and eye, although she thought she looked different.

Ann was having a tea party in the nursery with a lovely cake with six candles and afterwards she was having a tea party for her toys. There was great excitement amongst the toys and Belinda Blue Eyes did hope that this time Ann would notice how nice she looked.

At last the great moment came. The table



looked very nice with loads of cakes and jellies and a special birthday cake for the toys in the middle of the table. The dolls sat round the table, and Golliwog and Toy Soldier sat opposite Belinda Blue Eyes. Poor Belinda Blue Eyes, she was feeling very unhappy once more, for her little mistress hadn't noticed her and the French doll kept looking at her very oddly. If only something would happen to make Ann notice her—and it did.

Toy Soldier was passing a piece of cake to Belinda Blue Eyes, when, yes, he knew what



was going to happen. A great big sneeze. *Atishoo* went Toy Soldier, and poor Belinda Blue Eyes! Off flew her wig, which landed on Ginger Cat's head just as he was entering the room. Ginger Cat blushed and looked uncomfortable. Belinda Blue Eyes began to cry and, horror of horrors, her bright new blue eye began to run down her cheek. There she was once more with nine red hairs and a smudgy blue eye.

Ann jumped up from the table. "My darling Belinda," she said. "Whatever have you been doing?"

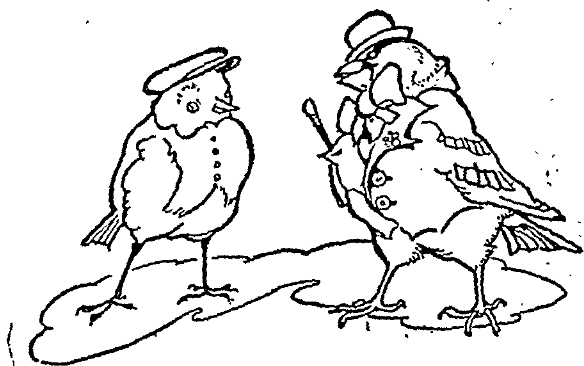
"I was only *trying* to make myself beautiful," sobbed Belinda Blue Eyes. "I thought that with the new dolls coming into the nursery you wouldn't love me any more."

"You silly goose, Belinda," said Ann. "Of course I'll always love you," and Belinda Blue Eyes dried her tears and smiled.

French doll, who was very kind-hearted really, made room for her by the side of Ann, and Ginger Cat grinned. He looked very funny sitting there with Belinda Blue Eyes' wig on his head.

DOROTHY M. SHEPPARD





LITTLE ROBIN REDBREAST

ONE morning Robin Redbreast preened his feathers and pulled down his little red waistcoat, put on his hat and set out for a walk.

He hadn't gone very far before he met Mr. Sparrow, hopping along in a very gay manner.

"Where are you off to, friend Sparrow?" chirped Robin.

"I'm going to find a little wife," twittered Mr. Sparrow. "It's the 14th of February, and all the birds will choose their little wives today."

"Dear me!" chirped Robin. "I ought to have a little wife, but I'm much too shy to find one." And he hopped on.

He hadn't gone very far when he saw Mr. Woodpecker, very busy cutting out a hole in a tree with his beak.

"What are you doing, friend Woodpecker?" chirped Robin.

"I'm making a little home for a little wife," said Mr. Woodpecker.

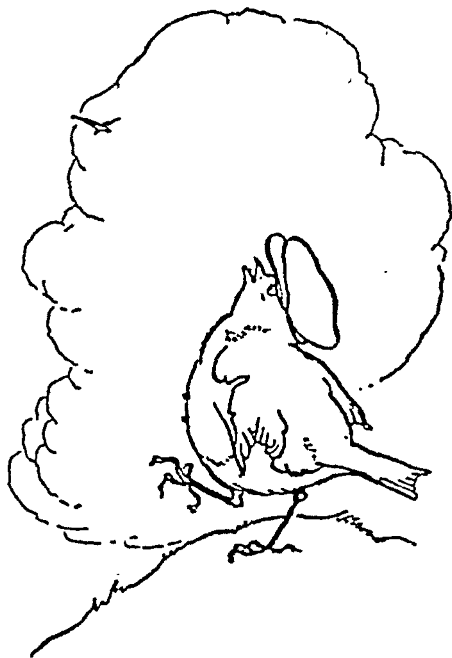
"Dear me!" chirped Robin. "I'd like to have a little home of my own, but I don't know how to win a little wife." And he hopped on.

Just then he saw a large notice stuck up in a tree:

HOW TO WIN A LITTLE WIFE

INSTRUCTION DAILY WITHIN

So he hopped inside the hollow tree (it was Mrs. Owl's house) and through into the garden.



Mrs. Owl was just hooting, "First of all the Skylark will show you how he wins his little wife."

Away sailed the Skylark high into the air,

followed by admiring glances from all the wood-folk who were looking on. Up and up he flew, towards the sun, singing beautifully all the while.

"How lovely to be able to sing like that," chirped Robin. "I can only sing a very tiny little song, which would never win me a little wife."

"Perhaps you will find one who doesn't care for singing," said the Lark kindly.

"Now Mr. Goldfinch will show you how he wins his little wife," hooted Mrs. Owl.

The Goldfinch opened and closed his wings again and again, so as to show his beautiful gold bars.

"How lovely to have wings like that," chirped Robin. "I have such very dull-coloured wings, they would never attract a pretty little wife."

"Perhaps you'll find one who doesn't care for bright-coloured wings," said the Goldfinch kindly.

"Now the Woodpigeon will show you how he wins his little wife," hooted Mrs. Owl.

The Woodpigeon bowed several times and then, flying into the air, glided slowly down,

so that all might admire his beautiful back, and the white bars on his wings.

"How lovely to be able to glide gracefully down like that," chirped Robin. "I only hop about in a very ordinary way, which will never win me a little wife."

"Perhaps you will find one who doesn't like gliding," cooed the Woodpigeon kindly.

The Wheatear had thought of something very clever. He picked up a piece of grass in his beak and laid it invitingly in the crevice of an old wall, near by, as if to suggest that it would be a nice place to build a nest.

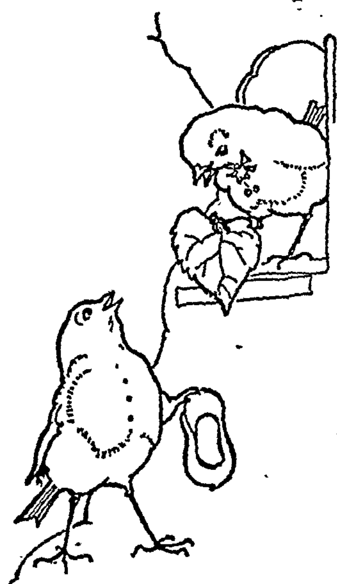
"Oh dear, I should never have thought of that," chirped Robin.

"Perhaps you'll find a little wife who likes to suggest where you will live herself," the Wheatear said kindly.

Robin felt rather sad. "I wonder what I can do that is different," he chirped. And he hopped out of Mrs. Owl's house and flew here, and there, and everywhere.

He passed Mr. Drake, who was swimming in his pond.

"What do you do to win a little wife?" chirped Robin.



"I show her all kinds of fancy steps," quacked Mr. Drake.

"But I don't know any fancy steps," chirped Robin.

"Well, well, well," quacked Mr. Drake, "I don't know what you can do."

Robin felt very sad. He thought and thought and at last he had an idea. He was so excited that he could hardly wait to find what he wanted. At last he found it. It was a certain tree which has a leaf just the shape of a heart. And he flew off with one of the leaves to the home of the dearest little lady Robin he knew, dropped it in her letter-box and hopped off. "Now she'll know I've given her my heart, without my having to tell her, which I should never do, I'm too shy," he chirped to himself.

Presently Miss Robin came home and found the little leaf and she cocked her head first on one side and then on the other side, and

just as she was trying to decide who had left it, up hopped Robin.

"Did you leave this little heart for me?" chirped Miss Robin.

"Yes, I did," answered Robin Redbreast.

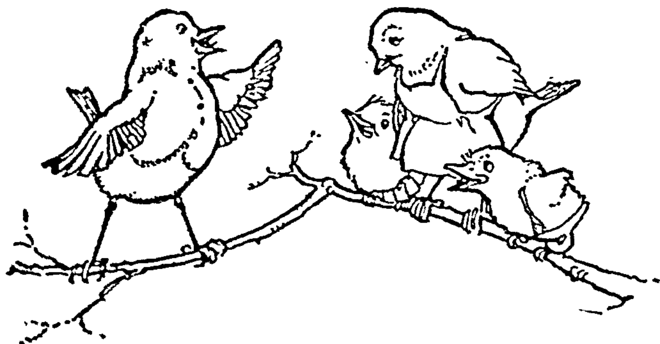
"Then I must give you a friendly little peck," chirped Miss Robin. And she did.

"I can't do any of the things the other birds do so cleverly," chirped Robin, "but I thought I might win you as my little wife if I gave you a little heart."

"I shall love to be your little wife," said Miss Robin, "and you have such a lovely red waistcoat. I love red waistcoats so much I even wear one myself."

So they were married, and ever since then Robin has been as proud and as daring as can be.

MADELEINE COLLIER



WELL WON DUCKLING

"I WISH I had a watering-can," sighed Davie Duckling.

"I dare say you do," said Mrs. Duckling. "Watering-cans cost a great deal of money these days, my son. You can water the garden quite as well with the old jug."

"But that's no *fun*," said Davie. "I want to water with a *watering*-can. Mr. Pigling has a watering-can. Do you think he would like me to water his garden?"

"You had better ask him," said Mrs. Duckling. "And mind you don't do any mischief in his garden, now!"

Off ran Davie to Mr. Pigling's garden, and there was Mr. Pigling busy among his young green peas. There, too, was the watering-can standing beside the rain-water tub.

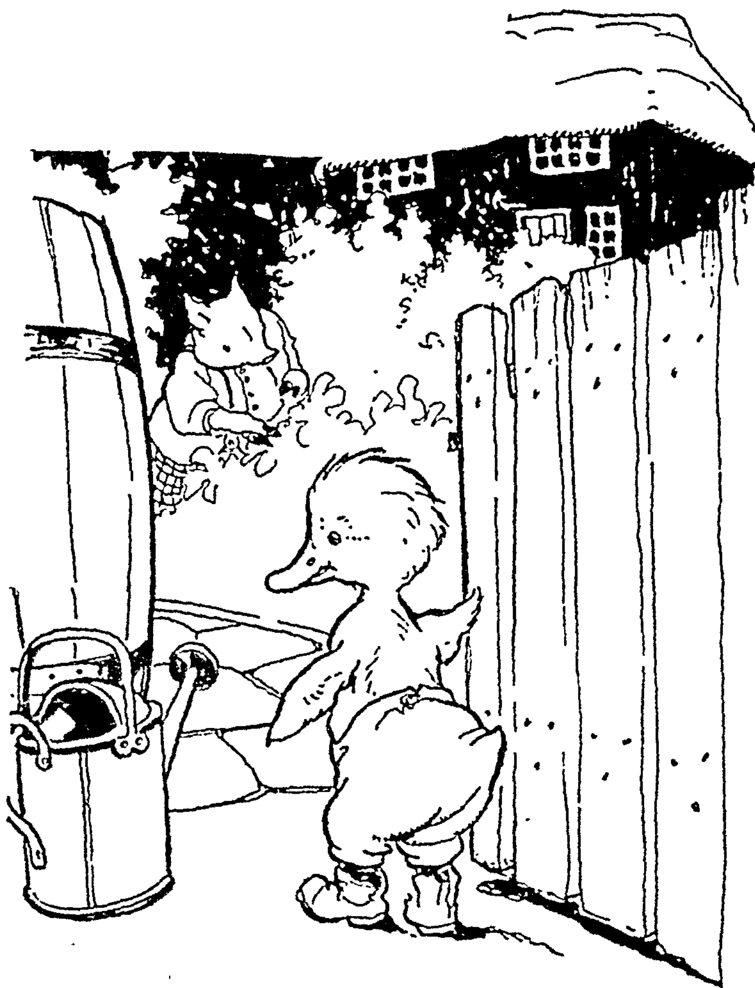
Davie went in and said politely, "Good morning, Mr. Pigling. Do you want any help? I could water the garden for you if you like."

"Why, thank you, Davie," said Mr. Pigling.

"That is a kind offer. I've finished all the watering for today but I *should* like some help in sticking my peas.

Davie didn't like to say that wasn't what he wanted to do!

So Mr. Pigling cut the sticks the right lengths and Davie stuck them beside the rows of peas. It was very hard work because the ground was so dry, and once Davie lost his

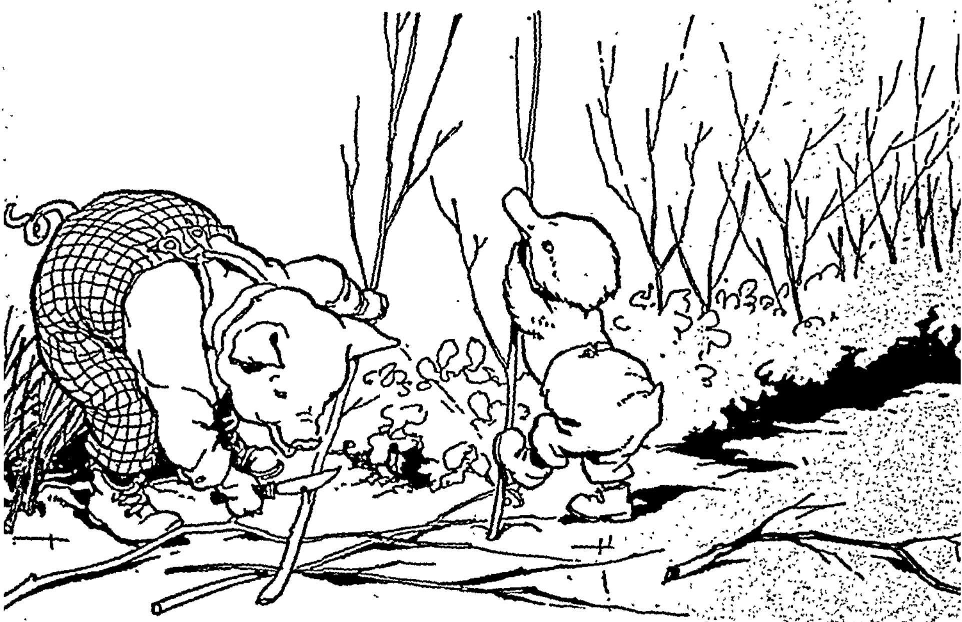


balance and toppled right over into the peas himself!

When they had finished there was still a nice bundle of sticks left.

"They would be just enough for Mother Quackling," said Mr. Pigling, "and I know she wants some for her peas. I wonder, Davie, as you are such a kind, helpful little chap, if you would like to take them to her. I don't think you will find them heavy if we get them on to your back."

The bundle of sticks didn't feel a bit heavy when Davie started, but by the time he reached Mother Quackling's cottage it had become





much heavier, which was rather peculiar since it only contained the same number of sticks!

In fact, Mother Quackling thought it was a bundle of pea sticks crawling up her garden path and she was quite surprised when she discovered Davie Duckling underneath!

"Why, Davie, you poor little thing," she cried. "Just fancy your carrying those sticks all the way from Mr. Pigling's. You are a good duckling!"

She took Davie indoors and gave him some of her home-made wine and ginger snaps all crisp from the oven, and Davie soon felt much better.

"I suppose, Davie, you don't pass the Rabbits' house on your way home, do you, dear?" said Mother Quackling. "You see, I forgot to put in Mr. Rabbit's collars when I sent home the washing and I'm afraid he won't have a clean one to go to work in."

Davie felt that after the wine and the biscuits he couldn't very well be disobliging and he said, "Well, I don't *really* pass the Rabbits' house, but I *could* take them."

"It *is* good of you," cried Mrs. Duckling. "Anyway, it's only a little parcel so it won't be heavy like the pea sticks."

No, it wasn't heavy, but the rabbits lived on the top of a steep hill because they liked the breezes, and the sun was very warm. Davie was terribly dry and dusty when he reached the top and he hoped Mrs. Rabbit would think to offer him a nice cool drink.

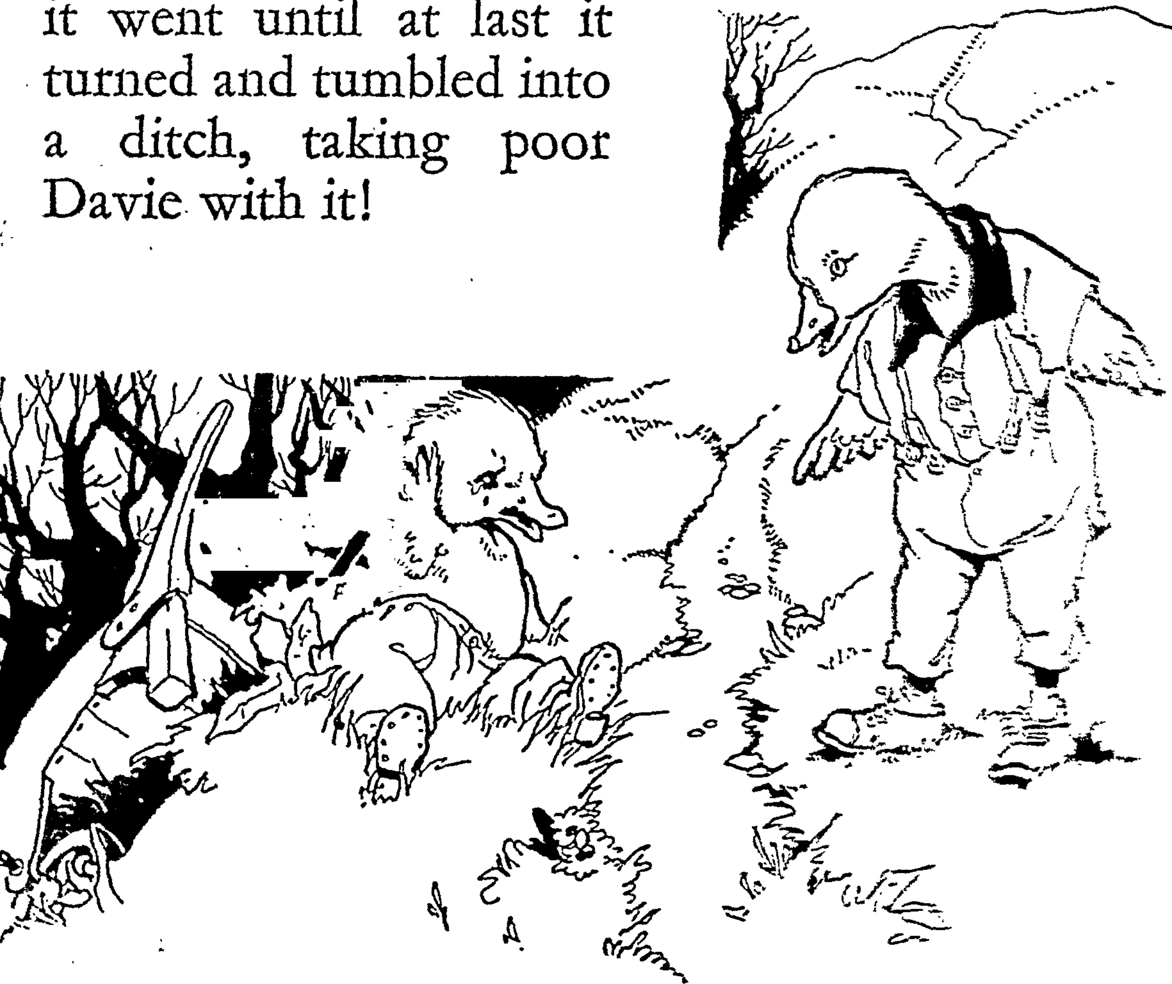
But there was only Mr. Rabbit at home.

"Why, Davie, how good of you to bring my collars," he cried. "I was down to my very last one."

Davie was turning away wearily to go home when Mr. Rabbit said, "I wonder, Davie, as you have to go down the hill again

if you would mind taking along Mr. Gosling's wheel barrow and leaving it at his house at the bottom. I expect he wants it back but I've been too busy to take it. It's quite empty so you shouldn't have any bother with it."

But the barrow was a very heavy one and the hill was very steep and Davie was very tired. And though he held on as hard as he could the barrow began to run away with him. Faster and faster it went until at last it turned and tumbled into a ditch, taking poor Davie with it!



Davie managed to pick himself out, feeling very sore and battered, and he was wondering how to get the barrow out too when a voice called, "Hallo, Davie, what are you doing in the ditch, and isn't that my Daddy's wheel-barrow?"

It was his friend Jimmy Gosling.

"Yes," said Davie, "it's a horrid old wheel-barrow!"

"Never mind," said Jimmy, "I'll help you," and between them they soon had it out and wheeled it home safely to Jimmy's garden.

"Are you coming to the Sports this afternoon?" asked Jimmy.

"Are there Sports?" said Davie, rubbing his bruises.

"Yes," said Jimmy, "in the big field. Didn't you know? There are all sorts of races and lovely prizes. It'll be fun."

"I don't feel like Sports," said Davie.

"You could watch, couldn't you?" said Jimmy.

"I'll see," said Davie.

Davie went home and his mother bathed his bruises and gave him a nice cold salad for his dinner. And when Davie spoke of the



Sports she said, "I should go if I were you. You can sit in the shade and watch the others and it will make a nice change for you."

So Davie went to the Sports, and as he sat watching the others he felt that he would like to take part, but he was too stiff and sore to join in any of the running races.

But when it came to the egg-and-spoon race somebody said, "Why don't you join in

this, Davie? You don't need to run. It's best if you go slowly."

Davie thought perhaps he could, so he took his egg and spoon and started off with the others.

And all the other competitors were hopping and skipping along with excitement, dropping their eggs because they were in such a hurry to get to the winning post. But Davie went slowly and steadily because of his bruises.

He didn't drop his egg once and he won the race quite easily.

Such a cheer went up!

And when the prize-giving came what do you think his prize was?

A lovely little red watering-can!

CHRISTINE E. BRADLEY



THE WONDERFUL WALK



YOU never saw such crossness on three children starting out for a walk. It simply stuck out all over them!

Robert was cross because he had just thought how to paint a sunset all full of splashy colours, and he wanted to do it *now*.

Belinda was cross because she had her new summer straw hat trimmed with pink rosebuds and blue ribbon and she wanted to wear it today, which Mother said would be very foolish in such weather when heavy showers kept coming down without warning.

Mark was cross because of the general

crossness, and he scuffed and scraped and kicked his shoes, which was really very bad for them indeed.

So there they were, all as cross as could be. What a family for Mother to take out!

And before they had gone very far, down came another heavy shower and they all ran to shelter under some trees which had spread themselves over the pavement.

And *what* do you think? Sitting under the wall at the back of the pavement where it was nice and dry was a man wearing a long dark jersey, and he had drawn on the pavement a row of pictures in coloured chalks. Some of them were of sunsets in lovely splashy colours.

They all looked at the pictures, and Robert said, "I wish I could do one."

"Well, try now," said the man. "There's a space here." And he gave Robert some chalks.

So Robert really and truly made a picture on the pavement. It wasn't quite like the man's pictures, but they all thought it was simply beautiful.

They had been so busy watching Robert they hadn't noticed what the man was doing,

but when they turned round what *do* you think they saw? There on the pavement was a picture of Belinda in her red mackintosh. You could see at once it was Belinda because it was exactly like she looked.

Belinda was terribly pleased and proud. But oh dear me, she did wish she was wearing her new summer straw hat trimmed with pink rosebuds and blue ribbon! She said so.





"Well, now," said the man, "it's very odd and peculiar, but if there's one thing I can't draw it's hats. [If I was to put a hat on you, dearie, it would look as if it had come out of the rag bag and *then* been sat on."

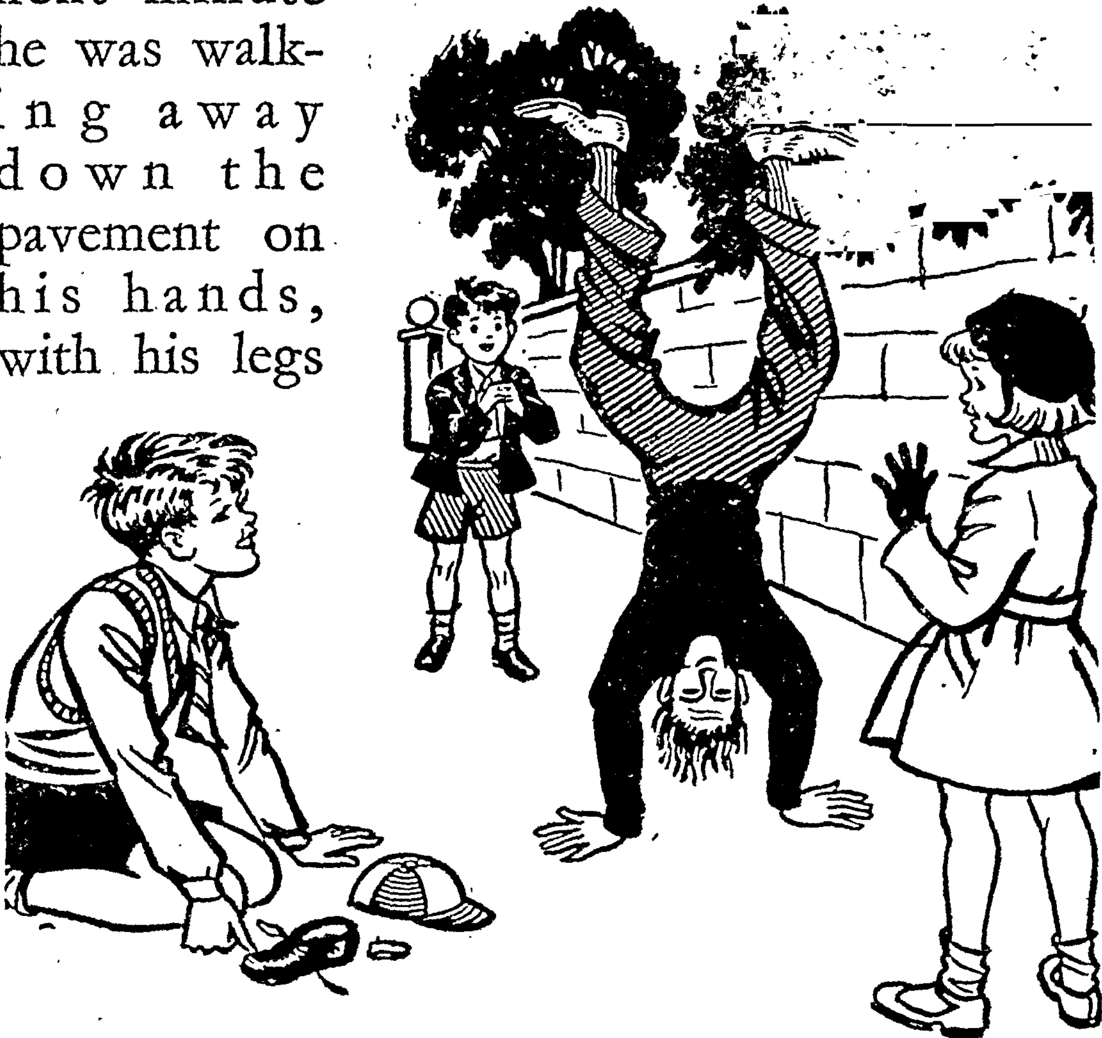
So then Belinda was very pleased she *wasn't* wearing her new hat, for she wouldn't want such a beautiful hat looking like *that*.

The shower was over now, and Mother got out her purse so that they could put some money in the man's hat, which was on the pavement beside him.

But just then one of Mark's shoes behaved as you would expect a shoe to behave which had been scuffed and kicked in such a manner. The heel came off.

Mark said he felt awfully funny walking without a heel on his shoe.

"You'll have to walk like this," said the man. And the next minute he was walking away down the pavement on his hands, with his legs



up in the air. He turned round and came walking back in the same way, then with a spring he was right way up again.

"Do it again, *please*!" cried the children.

"Worked in a circus once," said the man, when he had done it twice more. "It's chilly on this job sometimes, so I go through my tricks and that warms me up."

"Is that why you wear a jersey, so that the things won't fall out of your pockets?" asked Robert, who was rather good at thinking of clever things like that, and the man said it was.

"Could we do it?" cried the children. But Mother said they had better wait until they got home before they started practising.

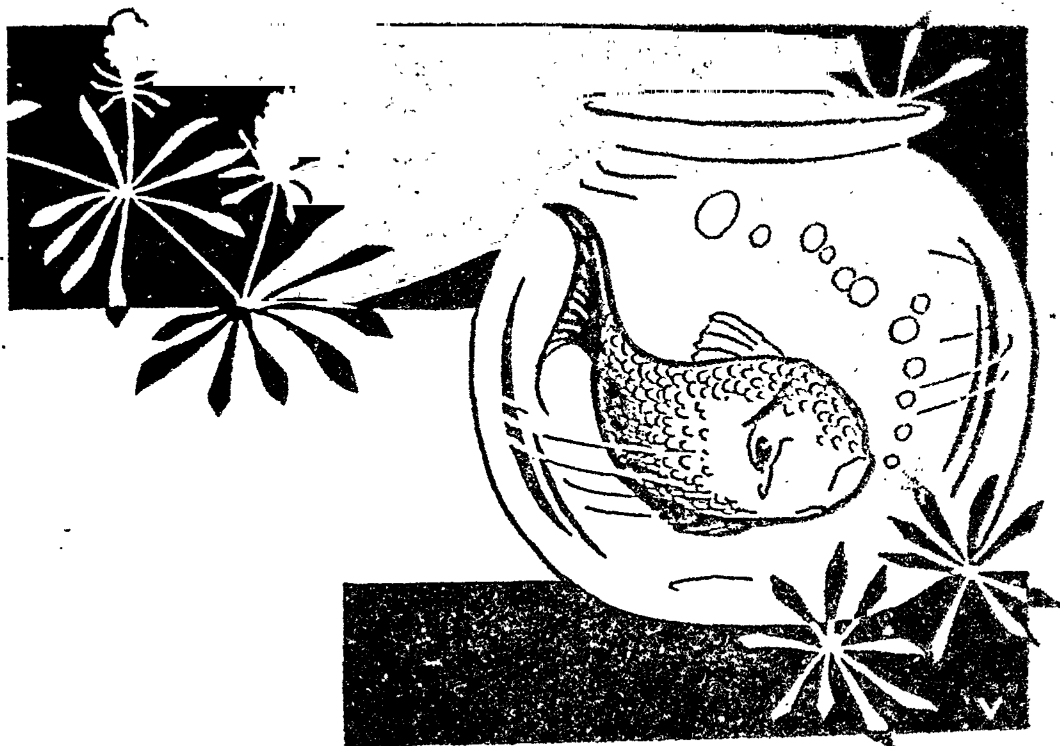
So they all said goodbye and thank you very much for such a lovely time.

And they all went hurrying home to start practising circus tricks, with Mark getting along very well in spite of the heel off his shoe.

You never saw such happiness on three children going home from a walk. It simply shone out all over them!

CHRISTINE E. BRADLEY

THE LONELY GOLDFISH



THE little goldfish swam round and round in his little glass bowl. There wasn't much else he *could* do because there was nothing else in the bowl but water and himself.

John, who was just five, had been taken by his mummy and daddy to the great big fair which was in the large field at the end of the village, and he had been—oh *so* clever—he had bounced a little ball into the narrow neck of a glass jar and had won the little goldfish.

Unfortunately the bowl the fair man had



ut the fish into was very small and, as John watched the little golden-red thing swimming endlessly round and round, he thought how lonely he must be and how very tired he must get without any weeds to swim in and out of, or pebbles to rest against. But, alas, the bowl was far too small to put anything else in so John sighed and went slowly out into the garden.

He wandered down the path till he came to the lily pond at the end of the garden. Here he stopped and gazed down at the lovely big

waterlily which had come out overnight. It had been a fat bud the last time he had looked at it.

John sat down in the sun to look at it more closely and, somehow—whether it was the afternoon heat, or whether it was magic—I don't know, but he began to nod and very soon he was sitting there, leaning up against the Rockery—fast asleep.

As he slept he dreamed, and in his dream



he heard the waterlily talking to someone, and when he looked into the clear water of the pond he saw that there was a little red fish rubbing himself up against her stalk.

John listened. "Yes," the waterlily was saying, "I know it must be lonely for you in the pond all by yourself but there are many lovely clumps of weed for you to play around in, and the sun shines so prettily on the water—and you can always play hide-and-seek behind the little waterfall—*no*, I really *don't* think you should grumble, little fish!"

But the little red fish sighed and replied, "I know I should be content, Waterlily, but if only I had another little fish to share the lovely things in this pond with me. . . ."

It was at that moment that John awoke with a start. He looked around him—there was nobody near. He looked at the large waterlily—she certainly didn't look as if she could talk! Then he looked at the water and, lo and behold, swimming to and fro was a little red goldfish.

John scrambled to his feet and ran back to the house.

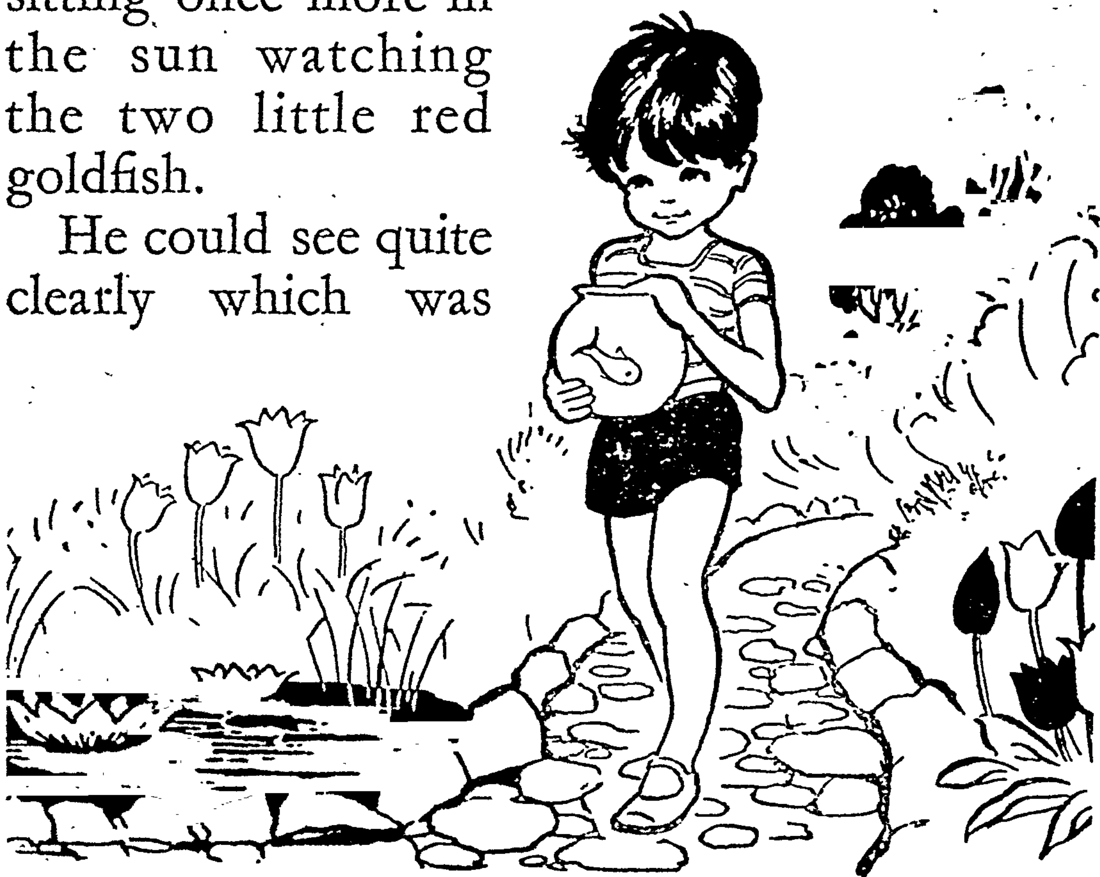
"Mummy, Mummy," he cried. "There's

another goldfish in the lily pond—oh, can I put the one I won in with him so they won't be lonely any more?"

John's mother smiled at the eager little face upturned to her own. "Why, yes, darling," she said. "I had quite forgotten that there might still be a fish in the pond. I thought Daddy had taken them all out, but one must have got left behind."

John carefully carried the small glass bowl down to the lily pond, and very soon he was sitting once more in the sun watching the two little red goldfish.

He could see quite clearly which was



his fish as it was a little bigger and more golden than the other.

At first *his* fish darted away as soon as the other swam near, but bye and bye, as John watched, *his* fish swam right up to the little red one and they seemed to rub noses and then, as John couldn't help laughing out loud —off they flashed together and were soon happily chasing each other through the bubbles made by the little waterfall, and squeezing their little bodies in and out the clumps of weeds.

John was smiling as he trotted indoors, carrying the empty glass bowl.

A. I. MUNGEAM

POOR MUMMY!

When Daddy bought Mummy a basket on wheels
He thought it would help her to shop.
But it gets so filled up with Mick, Me and the Pup,
That the parcels spill over the top.

CHRISTINE E. BRADLEY

THE GINGER-WHISKERED CAT

"DARLINGS, I wonder if you would go to the Jumble Sale for me?" said Mummy to Sandra and Brian one crisp winter morning. "I want you to take a message to Miss Parrott."

"Oh, Mummy, it's Saturday!" cried Brian. "We always go to Richard's house on Saturdays."

"I know, darling," said Mummy, "but I can't go myself because a friend of Daddy's is coming to mend the radiogram."

"All right," said Sandra, "we will go. Perhaps we'll see something nice to buy."

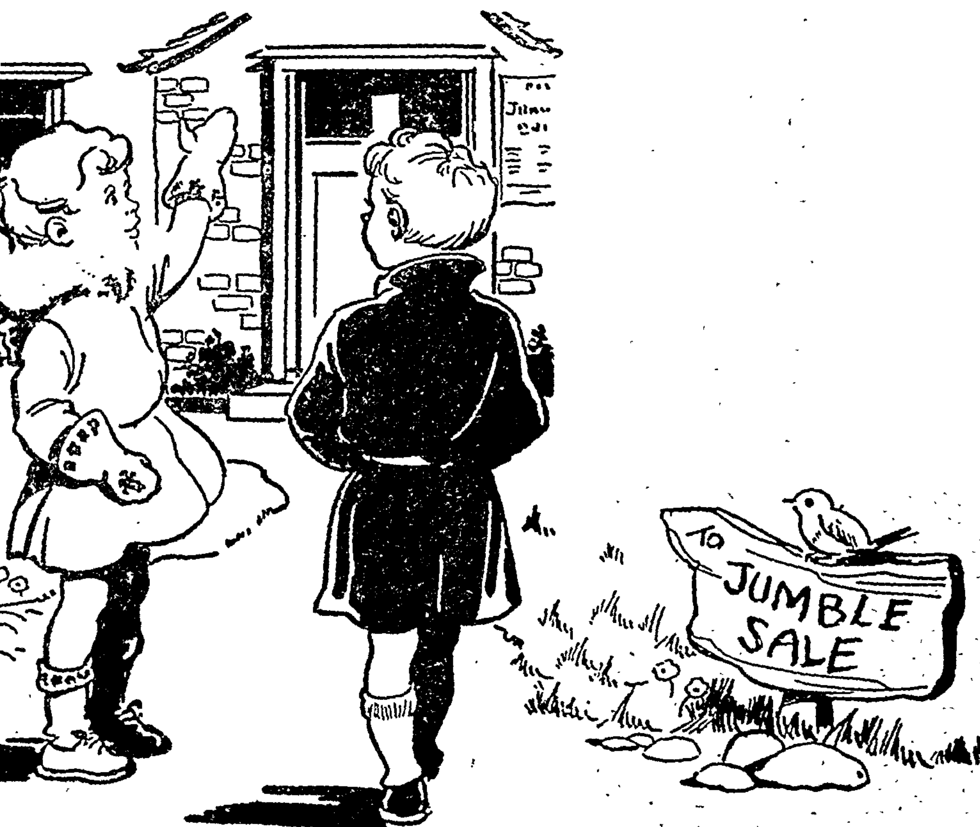
"Silly old Jumble Sale!" muttered Brian. "Who wants to buy old hats and shoes and things!"

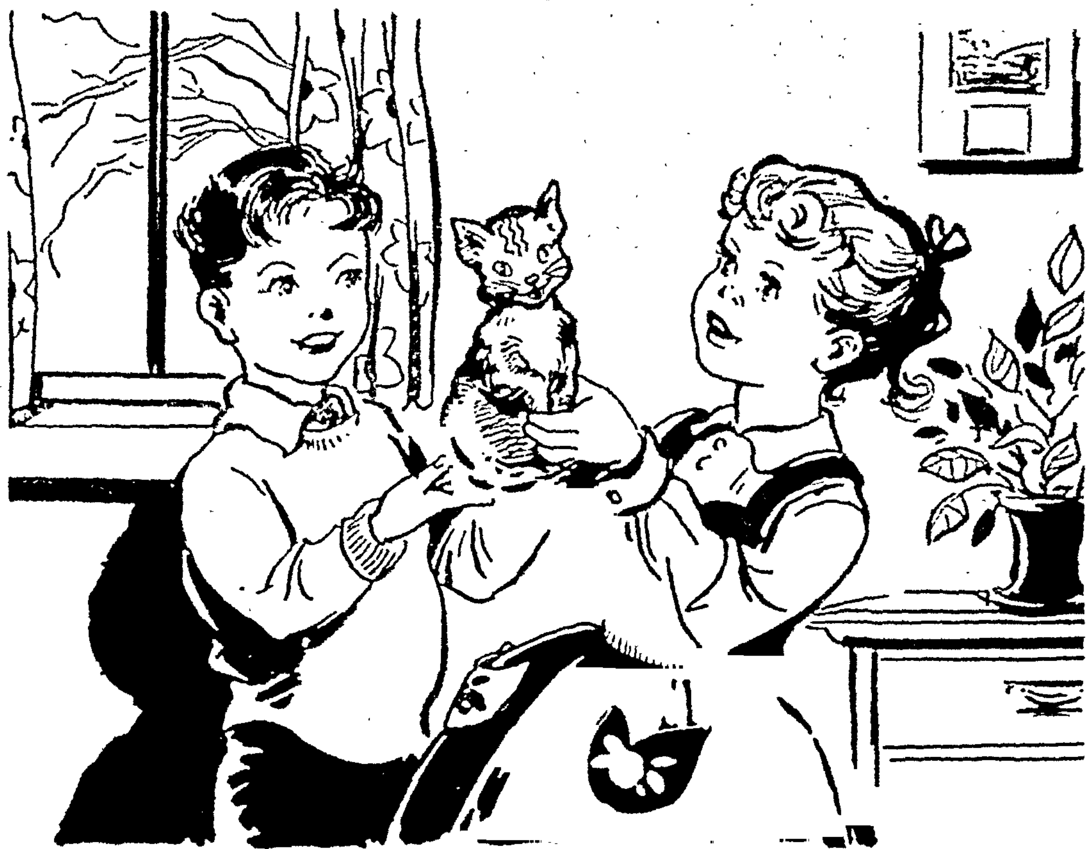
After lunch the twins set off for the village hall. The lanes were white with frost and the air was crisp and clear, but it was quite a long way to the village, and Brian kept thinking of the nice time they might have been having playing games with Richard in the big garden of his house.

When they reached the village hall they saw crowds of people going in.

"Look, there's old Miss Greene, and Miss Jolly, too!" cried Sandra, smiling and waving to the two old ladies. "Miss Parrott must be inside. She's going to look after the china stall."

Inside, the village hall was packed, and there was tall, thin Miss Parrott behind a counter





stacked with old jugs, battered kettles and ornaments that had been lying about in lumber-rooms for years, and as her eye roved over the counter Sandra gave a cry. "Look, Brian! A china cat with a grin and ginger whiskers exactly like Aunt Susan's Rufus! Oh! Do let's buy it for her, she'll love it!"

"It is only sixpence," said Miss Parrott, smiling at the children and holding up the handsome china cat.

"We'll have it, please," said Sandra, handing

Miss Parrott two threepenny bits. "Oh, and Mummy says will you come to tea with us on Sunday?" she concluded.

"That's very kind of your mother, dear," said Miss Parrott, smiling at them. "Tell her I'll be very pleased to come to tea. Now I'll wrap up pussy for you. He *is* a handsome fellow."

When they got home they showed Mummy the ginger-whiskered cat and Mummy agreed that it was exactly like the one Aunt Susan had. "We're going over to see her tomorrow. She's coming back from London tonight," she said, "so you can give it to her then."

Next day, when they arrived at Aunt Susan's cottage on the outskirts of the village, she seemed rather upset. But when the twins handed her the parcel her face brightened and then, as she unwrapped the paper and saw the ginger-whiskered cat, her face broke into smiles, and she gave a joyful cry.

"We thought he'd match Rufus," said Brian.

"Match Rufus!" cried Aunt Susan. "He *is* Rufus! Look, here's the crack in his neck where I mended it last week after I dropped him. You see," she went on, "I told the ladies

from the Jumble Sale I'd leave the things I'd got for them to collect in the garden shed and I quite forgot I'd been mending Rufus there and had left him on the shelf to dry! They must have thought that he was to go with the other things. I was awfully upset when I got home last night after the Jumble Sale was over. Now we'll put him back on the mantelpiece. I *am* glad to get him back. I've had him since I was a little girl. Your great-grandmother gave him to me."

"It *was* a good thing we went to the Jumble Sale," whispered Sandra, as they sat down to tea and watched Rufus grinning at them across the room, and before they went home Aunt Susan gave each of the twins a lovely present that she had brought all the way from London for them.

AILEEN E. PASSMORE

HOLES

I've two holes in my stocking!
Oh, what shall I do?
I only need one—
And I find I have two!

MARY VIVIAN

PUFFIN'S PUDDING



PUFFIN the pixie was just about to put the pudding on to boil for dinner when he found that there was a hole in the sauce-pan.

"Oh dear, what a bother!" cried Puffin. 'You can't cook a pudding in a saucepan with . hole in it. Whatever shall I do?"

It was such a lovely pudding, too. Puffin ad put the last of his currants into it and lenty of sugar and spice. And he had eaten

as little breakfast as possible so as to be sure of a good appetite for dinner.

"I shall have to go shopping," said Puffin, "and see if I can buy a new saucepan. But I'm afraid they cost a dreadful lot of money."

When he looked in the housekeeping purse he found there was only sixpence left!

"And that's got to last until Saturday," said Puffin. "Dear, oh dear, I am in a fix. Well, anyway, I'll go and have a look round the shops. Perhaps I might find a second-hand saucepan somewhere for sixpence."



Just then, looking out of the window, he saw Buffin going by with his nose in the air.

"There's that Buffin," said Puffin. "I guess *he's* got a saucepan. If only we hadn't fallen out I might have been able to borrow it to boil my pudding in. Oh dear, oh dear, how unlucky I am!"

Puffin and Buffin had been the greatest of friends until they took allotments side by side. Then trouble started. Buffin said Puffin's beans kept the sun off his tomatoes, and Puffin was annoyed because Buffin grew the biggest vegetable marrow and won a prize at the show. Since then they hadn't been on speaking terms.

So Puffin went off up the street to look for a saucepan. And Buffin went on down the street to the little shop at the corner to buy his morning paper. And soon he was coming back, walking along with his nose buried in it as was his usual way.

"I'd better call in to tell Bluff the news," he said to himself, and still scarcely raising his head he turned in at a gate and walked up the garden path and opened the door without knocking and went in, just as he always did

when he went to call on his friend Bluff.

"Hallo, Bluff!" called Buffin.

There was no answer, nobody about at all—only on the table a large pudding in a cloth and beside it a very old saucepan with a hole in it.

"Oh, what a lovely pudding!" cried Buffin. "But just look at the saucepan. Poor Bluff—he can't boil a pudding in an old saucepan like that!"

Then Buffin thought of something. "I know what I'll do," he said to himself. "I'll take it



home and cook it in *my* saucepan, and then I'll bring it back at dinner time. Won't that be a nice surprise for Bluff!"

So Buffin picked up the pudding and hurried off home, and in a very short time he had it boiling and bubbling away in his big saucepan. And on the stroke of one o'clock there he was back again at Bluff's house bearing the big steaming pudding.

Bluff was laying the table for dinner, a little sadly because there wasn't very much for dinner today. There wasn't a second course at all.

"Here you are, Bluff," cried Buffin. "Here's your pudding, piping hot and done to a turn!"

Bluff's eyes grew round when he saw the pudding.

"Whatever do you mean, Buffin?" he cried. "That isn't *my* pudding."

"Of course it is," said Buffin. "It must be. I found it here on your table waiting to be boiled, and I saw your saucepan had a hole in it so I took the pudding home and boiled it in my saucepan."

"There's a mistake somewhere, Buffin," said Bluff. "That *isn't* my pudding. I only wish it was," Bluff added, wistfully.



At that minute Puffin burst in.

"Bluff," he cried, "somebody's stolen my pudding!"

Puffin had had a very trying morning. Though he had searched all over town he hadn't been able to find a saucepan anywhere for sixpence, not even a second-hand one, and now he was very tired and hot—and hungry. And when he saw his own beautiful pudding on the table his face grew red with rage, and, pointing at Buffin, he cried,

"*You* stole my pudding. I know you did.



I saw you going past my house and when I had gone out you went in and stole it!"

Buffin, of course, saw now just what had happened. And his face, too, grew red and he gulped once or twice and then he said,

"I really am very sorry, Puffin. It's all due to my bad habit of walking along with my nose in the newspaper. I thought it was Bluff's house I had come into and Bluff's

pudding on the table and I took it home to boil it for him because his saucepan had a hole in it. But I see now," said Buffin, "it must have been your house, Puffin, and your pudding, and I really *am* sorry about it."

Puffin didn't know quite what to say. He wasn't really sure whether he believed Buffin or not, but it was rather difficult to remain angry in face of such a handsome apology.



"Anyway," put in Bluff, "the pudding's here, Puffin. Nobody's eaten it. Hadn't you better take it home and have it while it's hot?"

Puffin looked at the pudding on the table, all swelled out big and round in its cloth like a football. And he said,

"But I couldn't possibly eat it all. There's plenty for three. Can't we all sit down here and have it together?"

"Of course we can, Puffin!" cried Bluff, his face beaming, as he ran to the cupboard to get out extra plates and things.

And soon the three of them were gathered round the table tucking into Puffin's pudding and saying it was the best pudding they had ever eaten. And Bluff was delighted to see that Puffin and Buffin were soon chattering away like the old friends they used to be.

When they had eaten all the pudding and washed all the dishes and had a little rest, Puffin and Buffin left the house together arm in arm.

"If you like, Buffin," said Puffin, "I don't mind having my beans in another place next time so that they don't keep the sun off your

tomatoes. They didn't do very well there, anyway."

"Thank you, Puffin," said Buffin. "And you know, Puffin, I could not help my vegetable marrows growing bigger than yours. But I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you some of my special seeds and then your marrows will be sure to grow as big as mine."

"Thank you very much, Buffin," said Puffin, and they shook hands and were the best of pals ever after.

CHRISTINE E. BRADLEY



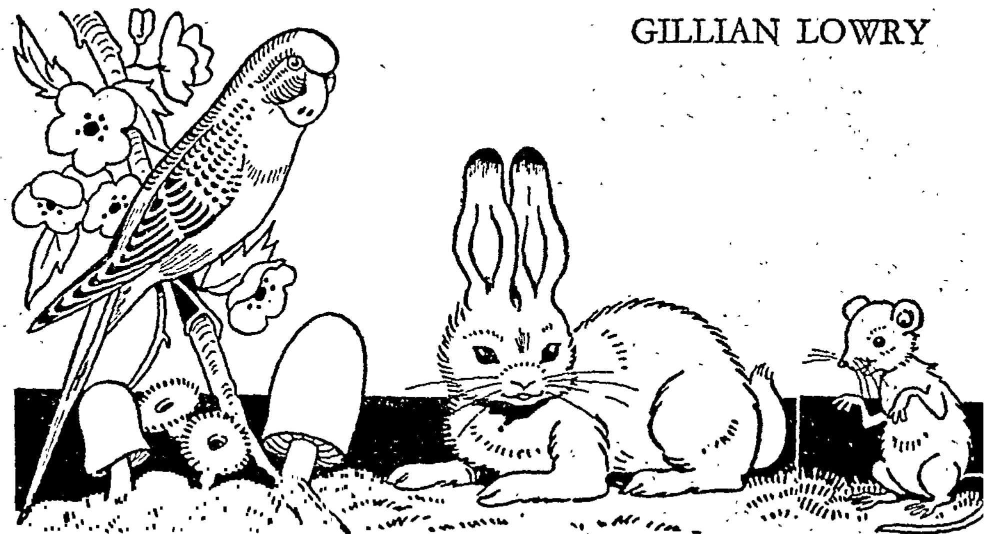
MY PETS

I have a little Budgie
With a yellow beak;
He is only five months old
But learning how to speak.

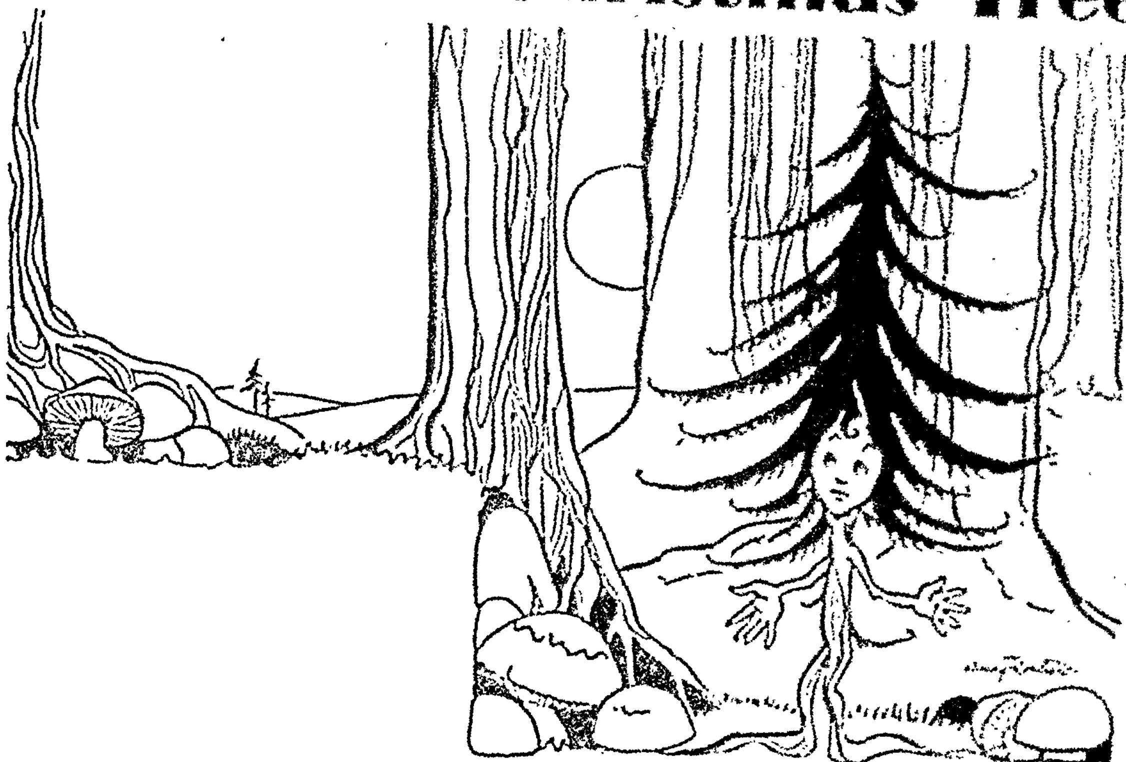
I have a little Bunny;
"Snowy" is his name:
I have not had him very long
But already he is tame.

I have a little Mouse
With eyes of pinky-white;
I can hold her in my hand
But I must not hold her tight.

GILLIAN LOWRY



The Little Christmas Tree



THE little Christmas tree was crying. All the other Christmas trees were tall and had long branches covered in green shiny leaves. They waved their arms to the wind and called out to him as he blew by.

The little tree heard them talking about Christmas.

"I am going to the palace for the prince and princess," said the first tree, shaking his head so that little flakes of snow and frost dropped down the little Christmas tree's neck.



"And I am going to Farmer Giles's big farmhouse. They are going to dress me up for the party on Christmas Day," said tree number two.

"Oh, that's nothing," said number three. "I'm being taken to the children's hospital up on the hill. I'll have candles on my branches and toys and tinsel. On my topmost branch I'll have a fairy with a star on her wand! Hundreds of people will see me!" And he tossed his leaves and bowed right and left, and more drops fell down the neck of the little tree.

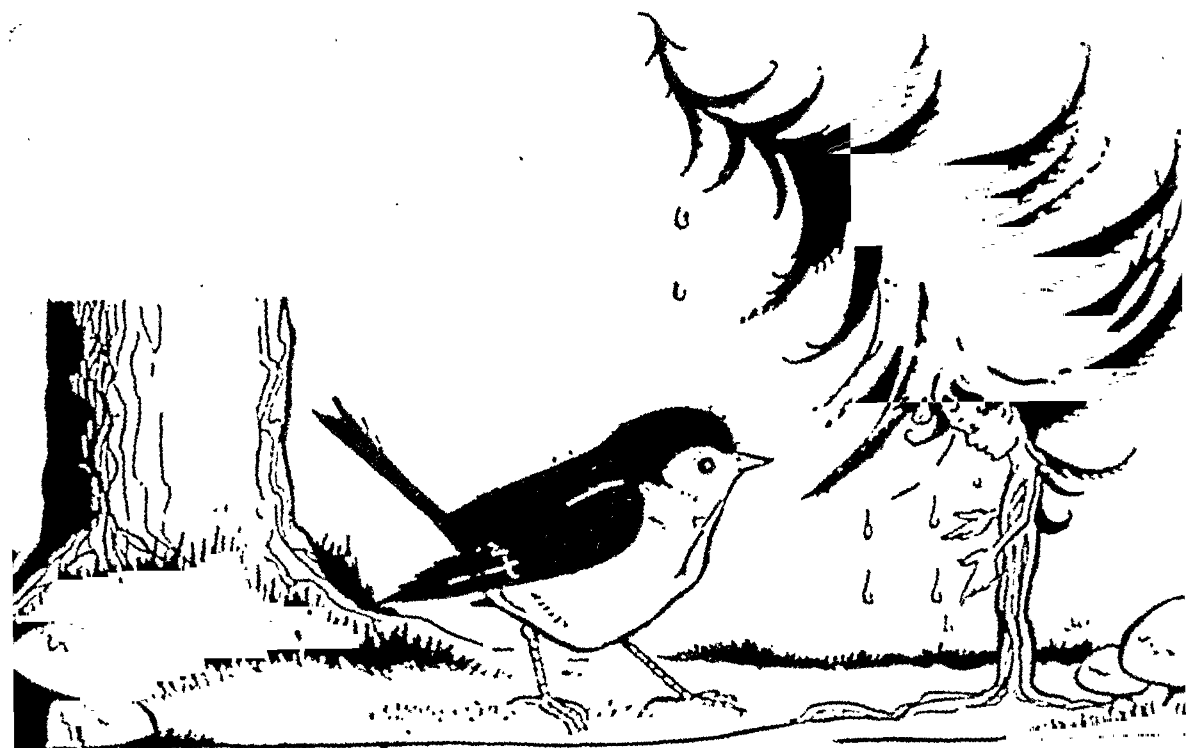
For, you see, he grew right in the middle of the big trees in the wood.

"What about you, child?" said number two, kindly. "Have you been chosen for Christmas?"

"No, I haven't," sobbed the little tree, putting his fingers up to hide his tears. "No one wants me."

"You should grow up, shrimp," said number three, teasing him. Which made the little tree cry more than ever!

Just then a Robin Redbreast flew by. He heard the little tree crying and said, "Hey



there, little tree, you mustn't cry, it's nearly Christmas. That won't do at all. Why are you crying so sadly?"

And so the baby tree told the robin all about it.

"I'll soon alter that," said the robin. "You'll see." And he flew to the top of the little tree and began to sing a most beautiful song.

Robin sang of the wind and the stars. His song was so sweet that a woodcutter who was walking through the wood stopped to listen. And robin sang on until he could sing no more.

The woodcutter smiled and said to himself.

"I must have that little tree for my children this Christmas." And he fetched his spade and he dug up the little tree and picked him up and put him over his shoulder. Then he began to walk home.

"Goodbye, little tree. Now you'll be all right," cried the three big trees. "Happy Christmas!"

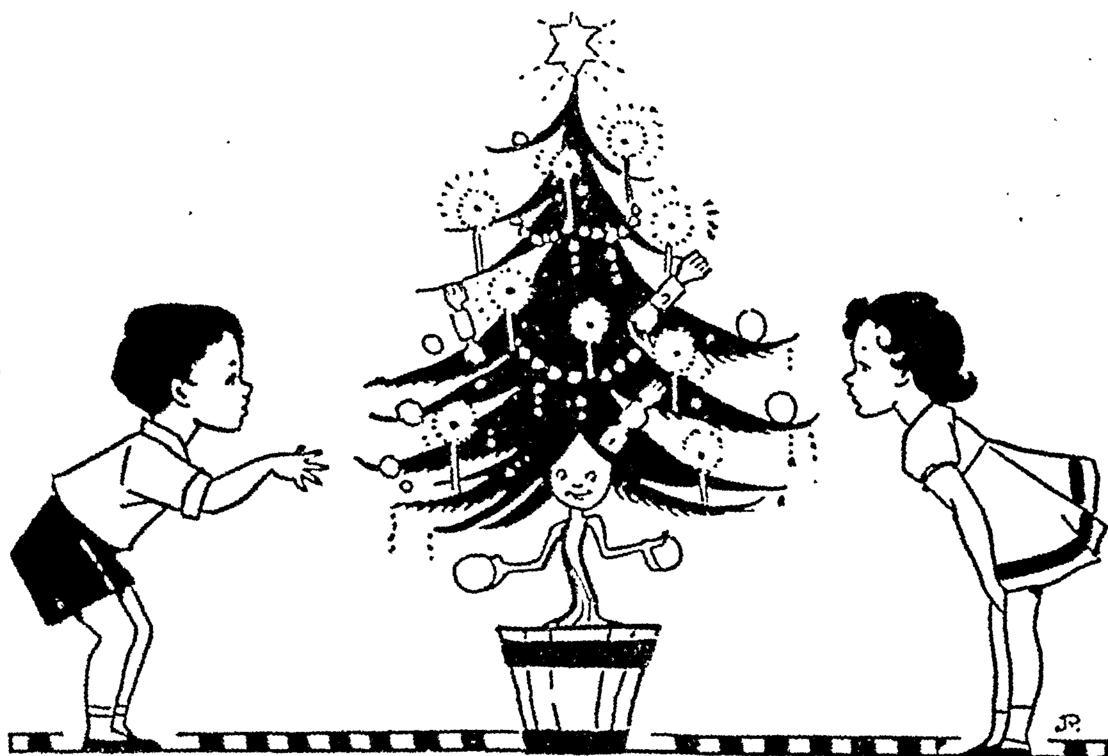
"Happy Christmas!" answered the little tree, smiling through his tears.

He was so very happy now. And the robin flew overhead and sang one more song of joy.

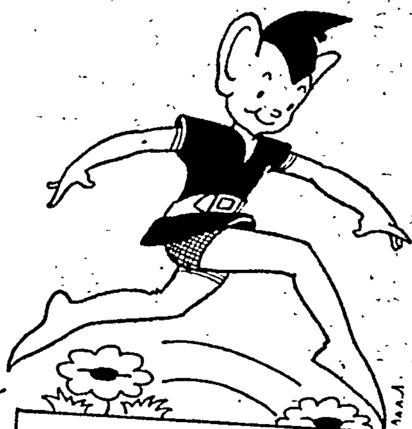
The little tree had a lovely Christmas. He was dressed with red candles and coloured balls and he stood in a small green tub. The children danced round him. They loved him and the little tree's branches nearly danced with joy.

The little tree had just the wonderful kind of Christmas he had longed for, after all!

DORA COOK



THE MAGIC PENCIL





"WELL, I never did," gasped John, staring down into his butterfly net.

"Oh yes you did! You can see you did!" snapped an angry little voice from inside the net. "Let me out of here or it will be the worse for you."

John had caught a pixie in his butterfly net! The pixie was little bigger than a large butterfly, and he had a cheery round face. At least, John felt sure that it was cheery when it was not looking as cross as it was now.

"I am sorry, but you did look like a butterfly leaping from daisy to daisy like that," apologised John.

"Can't a fellow do a few exercises without a silly boy catching him in a net?" scolded the pixie. "Now, will you let me go, young man?"

John took a firmer hold of the net so that the pixie could not get out.



"I would like to take you for my mother to see," he said.

The pixie gave a howl of rage.

"Mercy me, you can't do that!" he yelled. "If a grown-up looks at a pixie it just vanishes and I don't want to vanish. I am going to a buttercup party this afternoon."

"My mother is different," said John. "I am sure you would not vanish if she looked at you."

"I dare not risk it," groaned the pixie. "I will tell you what I will do. If you will let me go I will give you a wish."

"Will it come true?" asked John, who was delighted.

"There would not be much point in giving it to you if it didn't, would there?" snapped the pixie.

John wanted to make the most of this lovely chance and he tried hard to think of something really wonderful.

Then he thought of school, and he had a marvellous idea.

"Do you think that I could have a pencil that knows everything?" he asked the pixie eagerly.

"Lazy young scamp," sniffed the pixie. "Oh well, that is an easy one. What colour do you want?"

"Blue, please, with a point that never needs sharpening," said John.

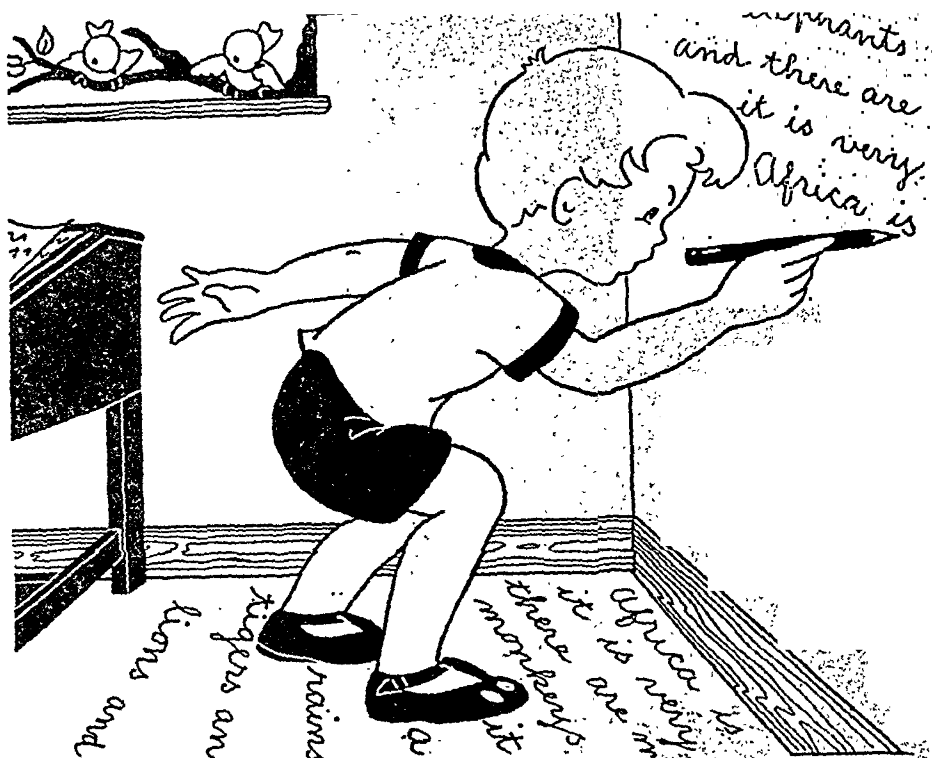
He felt a tug in his pocket and, looking down, he saw the pencil already there—a bright blue one with a sharp point. The pixie escaped from the net whilst John was admiring his prize and flitted away into the grass.

John could hardly wait to get to school to try out his magic pencil. The lesson was arithmetic.

For the first time in his life John—or, rather, the pencil—got every sum right. Spelling was just the same! The pencil wrote in every word correctly.

Then it was geography. The first question was to write down all about Africa. The pencil set off smartly and it wrote on until it had filled the whole page of John's exercise book.

That was enough and John tried to stop it, but the pencil just flicked over the page and went on.



John's friends had finished writing and they were waiting impatiently for John. The teacher stared at him in pleased surprise as the pencil went on until the whole book was full, and then even the teacher told John to stop.

But John couldn't, or the pencil wouldn't. Now that there was no paper left it wrote all over the desk and across the floor; then oh dear, right across the nice cream walls.

The master shouted. The children shouted. John shouted back. There was such a hulla

baloo until suddenly all the voices seemed to change into that of John's mother.

"Come on, lazy bones," it said. "Time for supper and bed. You have not caught any poor butterflies, I am glad to see!"

"No, and no pixies either, thank goodness!" said John, with a sigh of relief.

A magic pencil may sound a good idea, but I think it is much safer to manage without one, except in dreams, don't you?

VIOLET M. WILLIAMS

